

in the two Head Start classrooms they studied. They suggest ways preschool teachers can initiate sociodramatic play or expand it when children spontaneously produce sociodramatic play themes. As someone who has observed frequent and rich spontaneous sociodramatic play in several longitudinal ethnographies of Head Start and other preschool classrooms, I am hesitant to endorse excessive teacher involvement. The Berkley and Mahoney study was of short duration, and perhaps the children did not have enough time together to engage in sociodramatic play on a regular basis. I agree that teachers can be very helpful in launching such play, especially in the early weeks of a school term, and in encouraging a variety of types of sociodramatic play. However, too much adult engineering can stifle children's creativity in this very important type of play.

The last section contains only one essay, an abstract, theoretical reflection on play in general by Thomas S. Henricks that builds on his previous work and is well written and interesting—and very different from all the other works in the volume. Henricks argues that a combination of two qualities distinguishes playful behavior: transformation and consummation. He develops his argument impressively, often displaying innovative and original ideas, and he relates his points to the works of a range of theorists from a variety of disciplines.

Overall, this book lacks the coherence to be useful as a course text in developmental psychology, the sociology or anthropology of childhood, or early-childhood education. Most chapters, with the exception of Henricks' insightful concluding theoretical essay, focus primarily

on play and children's psychological and social development. There is little recognition of or reference to studies dealing directly with play as part of childhood and the peer cultures of the young. However, scholars of children's play can still take much from various chapters depending on their interests.

—William A. Corsaro, *Indiana University, Bloomington, IN*

**Everyone Plays at the Library:
Creating Great Gaming
Experiences for All Ages**

Scott Nicholson

Medford, NJ: Information Today, Inc., 2010. Illustrations, endnotes, index. 232 pp. \$39.50 paper. ISBN: 9781573873987

Scott Nicholson, a librarian by training and assistant professor by trade, knows what he is talking about when it comes to libraries. In this book, he challenges librarians to ask themselves how gaming fits into their libraries and follows up with a practical guide for implementation.

The book is broken down into three sections. In the first section, "Introduction to Gaming in the Library," Nicholson gives a history and real-life examples of games in libraries. He also tackles demanding questions about literacy and gaming, as well as basic questions about noise, violence, and addiction.

In the second section, "The Five Gaming Experience Archetypes," the author discusses various types of games that can support different library goals. This section also includes his SNAKS model

(Social, Narrative, Action, Knowledge, Strategy) of the gaming experience, which will help any library build a solid gaming foundation while convincing hesitant board members and patrons that gaming does indeed align with the library's mission. Nicholson not only highlights the enjoyment factor of gaming but also the real educational, social, and developmental values that gaming has to offer.

In the chapter entitled "Knowledge Gaming Experiences," he describes games that rely on the external knowledge players bring to the table. This chapter breaks down each type of game (from environmental to big games) giving examples with price, number of players, and experience. He follows with similar chapters on strategy games, action games, narrative games, and social games. Each of these chapters is filled with indispensable knowledge for the librarian constantly challenged with finding new and valuable library programs.

The final section of this three-part book, "Putting It All Together," is my favorite. This is a step-by-step guide on how to put a program together. The first chapter in this section focuses on planning the program, from determining goals to facilitating the experience. The second chapter in the section highlights marketing and partnerships. This chapter helps those of us working in libraries during a budget crisis. There is also a smart section on gamers. For those who do not play games themselves and do not know game players, gamers can be hard to understand. Nicholson gives an accurate and reliable description.

The last two chapters, "Assessment and Justification" and "Keeping Up and Focusing On the Fun," are the perfect ending to this quick read. The chapter on

assessment gives examples of survey questions and measurements to evaluate games programs. Knowing what to ask and why you ask it can be the most difficult part of an evaluation, and the author has provided good guidelines to follow that will make evaluations a breeze. The last chapter emphasizes the importance of maintaining a game collection. Nicholson warns that games can become outdated quickly and that this can negatively affect your gaming programs. He offers examples of print resources and places to find reputable reviews to keep your collection on top of the trends.

Overall, this book reminds me of the joys of being a librarian. Not only do librarians offer new literary experiences, but they also can provide valuable gaming experiences that will keep patrons coming back for more. Reading *Everyone Plays at the Library* will excite you to start your own gaming programs and prepare you to accomplish it.

—Anna Slaughter, *Canton Public Library, Canton, OH*

The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses

Jesse Schell

Burlington, MA: Morgan Kaufmann Publishers, 2008. Endnotes, bibliography, index. 512 pp. \$59.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780123694966

The opening pages of Jesse Schell's *The Art of Game Design* broadcast its purpose loudly, even before his prose begins. A detailed and well-organized table of con-