

live in a moment of agreement. We are not all able to find stable play communities. Not everyone can search for a well-played game. It is a privilege that some of us can, and it is our responsibility to ensure more of us can, too.

De Koven's new preface provides historical context for the book as he recounts his influences and the formation of the Games Preserve and the New Games Foundation. And while he describes his move to Silicon Valley and the rise of positive psychology after the first edition of the book was published almost forty years ago, he does not go into much detail about how these trends—especially the rise of digital games and digitally mediated ways to communicate—affect his ideas. Nor does he specify why the New Games Movement of the 1980s failed to gain traction. The new foreword by Eric Zimmerman, however, explains how the book was extremely prescient on many topics regarding newer trends in games and play. The best part of the new foreword is Zimmerman's description of *The Well-Played Game* as an antidote to our current tendency to instrumentalize games and play (e.g., for learning).

In the end, I suppose De Koven does not have to reference anyone or prove how his work is still relevant. He is the source material, and he talks honestly and logically through an extended thought process about play and what it means to capture and maintain moments of greatness. His is a search for excellence in all of us and for maximizing bliss for everyone as a collective. The never-ending search for a well-played game is really a never-ending search for how to be good to yourself and to others. That is pretty timeless, and it

may well be my new definition of gaming.

—Mark Chen, *Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA*

Understanding Young Children's Learning through Play: Building Playful Pedagogies

Pat Broadhead and Andy Burt

New York: Routledge, 2012. References, index, images. 170 pp. \$47.95 paper. ISBN: 9780415614283

Play, Learning, and Children's Development: Everyday Life in Families and Transition to School

Mariane Hedegaard and Marilyn Flear

New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. References, index, images. 231 pp. \$99.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781107028647

Pat Broadhead and Andy Burt's *Understanding Young Children's Learning through Play* is an insightful analysis of open-ended, free-choice play in the Early Years Unit (part of the United Kingdom's Early Years Learning Framework curriculum) for children aged three through five at a primary school in York, England. The book consists of a series of vignettes that include interviews with staff members and the children's interpretations of events as they watched themselves on video. Book chapters focus on the role of adult involvement, what can be learned from risk and conflict, and the ways in which children progress from new child to master player.

Although the book discusses play throughout this early-childhood program,

an outdoor play area dubbed “the whatever you want it to be place” becomes the centerpiece for the study. This area lacked traditional play equipment, but teachers stocked it with such loose parts as milk crates, boards, barrels, cable reels, ropes, tarps, and tubing that children could turn into whatever they wish. Given that the indoor space had direct access to the outdoors, the inside area also began gradually to evolve into a “whatever you want it to be space” through the addition of netting to create a den, curtains to form a stage, and gallery space for the display of artwork. Through observing the children and participating where appropriate, staff helped facilitate the development of the children through their play.

Broadhead and Burt also provide a brief history of the British National Curriculum (1988) and the effect of the standards movement on the way the English typically incorporate play into early-childhood programs. Their research shows how much children learn when teachers build on children’s free play rather than dominate it. As a result, early-childhood practitioners and researchers will find this book a useful read. Practitioners will gain ideas for open-ended materials to spark initiative in children as well as ways to learn from and become involved (but not overly involved) in children’s play. Researchers can also learn from the authors’ innovative methodology of video recording children’s indoor and outdoor play as the school moved from teacher-dominated children’s play toward a model in which the children’s play guided the teachers. The authors showed these videos to the children and teachers to get their interpretations.

In *Play, Learning, and Children’s Development: Everyday Life in Families and Transition to School*, authors Mariane Hedegaard and Marilyn Fleer explore play and routines in the lives of four families—two in Denmark and two in Australia—with young children. Each of the book’s four sections compares issues confronting several families and draws on the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, and psychology to interpret them.

The authors, one in Denmark and the other in Australia, worked with research assistants who visited the families over the course of ten to twelve months. During that period, the Danish researchers took notes and recorded video of visits to day-care centers and schools while the Australian researchers shot one hundred hours of video in homes and schools. Given that the Danish subjects were middle-income families living in apartments in urban areas and the Australian subjects were unemployed families on social welfare in single-family dwellings in rural communities, comparisons are difficult. However, the rich descriptions of early morning activities, indoor and outdoor family play, dinnertime rules and routines, homework, bedtime routines, and transitions to school show interesting patterns. The researchers explain similarities and differences in time demands caused by work and school, use of indoor and outdoor space for play, and the role of siblings and gender in a child’s development.

In a section on the transition to school, the authors illustrate significant similarities and differences between their sample schools. For example, in Denmark, six-year-olds attend kindergarten to accustom them to school routines. They focus

little on academics, and most activities are teacher directed with little free play. In contrast, six-year-old students in Victoria, Australia, focus on literacy and numeracy, also with little play. In both countries, the transition to school is important for children and their family's schedules. Indeed, the description of one Australian family illuminates some of the problems caused by disconnecting rules at home and school, as well as the lack of transportation and sufficient food.

The authors also demonstrate the potential effects of time constraints and poverty on family dynamics. These important insights are especially useful for family studies practitioners and researchers interested in the sociology of families from various cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. However, the differences in the samples make it difficult to come to any sure conclusions from a cross-national comparison.

Both Broadhead and Burt and Hede-gaard and Fler draw heavily on the theories of Lev Vygotsky and the cross-cultural research of Barbara Rogoff. Yet the authors discuss play quite differently. For Hede-gaard and Fler, play and learning are separate concepts. They describe play as the free play that children do at home—including play with a train set, a family game of football, play with garden tools, construction and pretend play in the sand-box, and rough-and-tumble play as children jump on living room cushions. The authors discuss the importance of both play and learning as if they are two important but separate aspects of a child's development. For Broadhead and Burt, play and learning are not separate concepts. They focus instead on playful learning

during which children learn social skills, develop their imaginations, use language and drawings to communicate their ideas, and improve their coordination through child-initiated play.

Although these two books aim at slightly different audiences—family studies practitioners and researchers versus early-childhood educators—they both provide useful insights and a holistic view of children in home and school settings. Moreover, in the current test-driven culture of education, these books help demonstrate the importance of play in children's education.

—Olga S. Jarrett, *Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA*

Getting Physical: The Rise of Fitness Culture in America

Shelly McKenzie

Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2013. Introduction, images, notes, bibliography, index. 254 pp. \$34.95 cloth. ISBN: 97807006196061

Making the American Body: The Remarkable Saga of the Men and Women Whose Feats, Feuds, and Passions Shaped the Fitness Industry

Jonathan Black

Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2013. Introduction, images, notes, index. 223 pp. \$27.95 cloth. ISBN: 97808032143705

The recent American worry about obesity, the lack of exercise, and unhealthy diets