

that rather than consider man the result of “interposition of a deity,” one should consider him “created from animals” (p. 269).

One limitation to this kind of approach to historical change is that the analysis is overly linear: this led to that led to this led to that. For example, according to Johnson, the delight among seventeenth-century British elite women in shopping for chintz and calico from India sparked the demand for cotton that led to the invention of machines to produce cotton fabrics that in turn fed the Industrial Revolution and, sadly, the atrocity of slavery in the American South. History, however, is complicated. The web of historical change contains many strands coming from different directions. For example, the human quest for swifter and more efficient transportation that led to railroads also contributed to industrialization. Also, Johnson’s attribution of American slavery to cotton plantations overlooks the broad incidence of slavery in domestic and service functions—a much greater proportion of Southern urban households than rural households owned slaves. Still, Johnson’s point is worthwhile. The sequence of a big change such as the Industrial Revolution did not have to start with serious men building machines and factories to create a new culture. Rather, women’s “mercurial appetites” for enjoyable things drove the advance (p. 32).

Without being explicit about meaning, Johnson uses concepts of play, joy, entertainment, and fun interchangeably. Thus, the book’s subtitle is misleading because his definitions are inadequate. Perhaps, Johnson could have applied Tom Sawyer’s characterization of play, as opposed to work: “Work,” Tom declared,

“is what a body is obliged to do. Play is what a body is not obliged to do.” It was the delight in that nonobligatory quality that planted the seeds of change that Johnson celebrates so delightfully.

—Howard P. Chudacoff, *Brown University, Providence, RI.*

Choice Time: How to Deepen Learning through Inquiry and Play, PreK–2

Renee Dinnerstein

Portsmouth, NH: Heinmann, 2016. Foreword, conclusion, acknowledgments, and works cited. 164pp. \$28.13 paper. ISBN: 9780325077659

Choice Time: How to Deepen Learning through Inquiry and Play, PreK–2 is a thorough look at younger children’s play through inquiry and exploration. Author Renee Dinnerstein divides the book into two primary aspects that promote play choice: part 1 discusses the importance of play, different types of play, and classroom logistics of play-centered development; while part 2 delves into the explanation and creation of these varied, multilayered centers using blocks, science, reading, dramatic play, math, and art.

In part 1, Dinnerstein describes why choice time and play are pivotal to children. Here, she recognizes many forms of play for their advantages, including artistic, sensory, fine-motor, rule-based, mastery, construction, make-believe, symbolic, and language play. Additionally, she says this play-based curricu-

lum celebrates children's differences and supports their various intelligences. For example, the author uses intelligences such as linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, body-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, and existential as a base of support to create differentiated instruction. Classroom construction—spacing, materials, displays, and time—helps give the room a voice. When creating a classroom where play centers can thrive, one should also take into account time, predictable routines, whole-class lessons, choices, clean-up time, and reflection.

Part 2 depicts six detailed and deconstructed centers. The block, the math and art center, the reading nook, and the dramatic play center incorporate the setup, launch, development, and enrichment of each area. The science center combines establishment guidelines with an introduction using developmentally appropriate plans and supplies, always urging teachers to pay attention to student questions and enhancement. The section also examines teacher interventions for each listed center, providing examples of teacher observations and possible responses for students. These teacher interventions include ways to encourage children to expand their exploration.

Dinnerstein suggests that to move forward, play centers need to engage children and provoke their thinking constantly. Children need to maintain interest, remain stimulated, and embrace life-long learning. Play-based inquiry achieved through investigation, curriculum connection, probing, and research plays a monumental role in children's growth. And she concludes that we need to con-

sider the individual needs of the child and cultivate a student-centric learning environment.

Throughout *Choice Time*, Dinnerstein supports the idea that children need to make choices to become more self-directed and more independent free thinkers. Her approach is widely accessible to teachers, parents, and the broader community.

I much welcome this easy-to-understand, insightful book, based on principles—a refreshing resource for all those interested in children and play. Dinnerstein delivers a solid, informative rationale for fostering a discovery-based curriculum, its benefits, and its pathways for success in early-childhood education. Her model creates a marvelous framework and vision for deepened educational learning with a masterful blueprint for children's learning and advancement.

—Kristie Lynch, *Manhattanville College, Purchase, NY*

**Creative Block Play:
A Comprehensive Guide to
Learning through Building**

Rosanne Regan Hansel

St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 2017.

Foreword, acknowledgments, introduction, references, and index. 158 pp. \$39.95 paper. ISBN: 9781605544458

The imaginative, exploratory play inspired by blocks uniquely contributes to children's development in every domain—social, emotional, cognitive, and physical. Their matchless versatility has made blocks a