

more empirical work is needed to evaluate the overall outcome of incorporating superhero-villain mythology into counseling and play therapy interventions, it is clear from the case studies presented here just how profound and meaningful this approach might be for both young and older clients, as well as those from diverse backgrounds.

Theorists and researchers from non-clinical backgrounds have long hailed the importance of imagination and pretend play in childhood for positive social, cognitive, and emotional outcomes, and more recently, they have clamored for more rigorous testing to determine whether these relationships are causal. Emerging work thus far on novel pretend play interventions in these largely nonclinical populations is encouraging. The powerful findings from Rubin and his contributors wonderfully complement and extend this research and further underscore the potential healing power of fantasy and imagination in childhood and beyond.

—Melissa McInnis Brown, *Texas Woman's University, Denton, TX*

Rethinking Recess: Creating Safe and Inclusive Playtime for All Children in School

Rebecca A. London

Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2019. Introduction, appendixes, notes, acknowledgments, and index. 264 pp. \$34.00 paper. ISBN: 9781682534144

Rethinking Recess is really two books in one, and one of them is terrific, the other fair. Half of the book makes a fine case for

why recess is important for all children, synthesizing data from large-scale research studies related to policy and the inequalities present in American schooling. The amount of time and resources allocated to urban, working-class children of color as compared to their white, more affluent, and suburban peers clearly falls into the category of an urgent social-justice issue. The author makes a clear case that all children need access to recess and justifies it for emotional, physical, and social reasons.

The hidden story is a love letter to the program Playworks. I wish it were obvious in the title. A clarification is in order. There is the European concept of playwork and there is the American company Playworks; they are two different creatures. Playwork in Europe, and some parts of Asia, refers to supervised play in open-ended adventure playgrounds. Hired staff are called playworkers, and according to my esteemed colleagues in the United Kingdom, the children are in charge. In the United States, Playworks is a company, and schools pay tens of thousands of dollars to bring in “coaches” who lead children through specific activities, fun activities, led by the coaches or older, selected children. The two concepts are related, but not the same, and this distinction is not mentioned anywhere in the book.

Rethinking Recess offers some useful strategies for schools, but I am not convinced by the research on the Playworks program. To compare schools with Playworks and those without it is an unfair comparison methodologically. What aspects of this highly valued program actually are responsible for the positive shifts seen at recess? Is it the reduced number of children, the novel materials, the designa-

tion of zones or areas for play, the caring presence of young and involved coaches, or the training offered to the school staff? Surely it is some combination, but there is a difference between documenting a general program that helps and a social scientific study of the variables at play.

I wish London had provided more here about play itself—and more words by the players, namely the children in each of these schools. Play is their domain. How might they rethink recess? The book reflects its adult bias: recess is for safety and for teachable moments in sharing. But what of children's expressive culture and their right to their own self-organization? What of the unconstrained break, with stimulating props, safe spaces, and good-hearted adults to cheer them on?

The book includes sections on understanding recess today, improving recess for all children, and supporting recess through policy and practice. The center of the book itself reflects the author's own studies of the Playworks program. I would consider this book a reasonable starting place for educators but would hope a more critical discussion could follow. For those seeking more about the topic, I recommend the American chapter of the International Play Association, the U.S. Play Coalition, The Association for the Study of Play, and back issues of both the *International Journal of Play* and the *American Journal of Play*. There is more to this story, much more.

—Anna Beresin, *University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA*

Transnational Sport in the American West: Oaxaca California Basketball

Bernardo Ramirez Ruiz

London: Lexington Books, 2019.

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Basketball in the barrios of the Southwest is as old as or older than *fútbol*—soccer—and played more than any other sport. In San Antonio, Mexican Americans were playing high school ball in the 1920s, and city leagues composed mostly of these young players on numerous other teams from the city, the region, and even outside the state. In fact, a number of all-Mexican American teams actually won national titles in Mexico where the game was also widely popular. One young man from San Antonio was even recruited to play for the Mexican Olympic team, though he eventually had to decline the offer.

So, it is not surprising that Mexican immigrants from Oaxaca played basketball and sponsored tournaments. The fact that they built full cultural events around them and created a sports conduit between countries and communities is significant within the sport. Researchers have already shown that other sports such as soccer and baseball, did attract big crowds—families came out, spent most of the day, and created a market for vendors of all kinds—but rarely have these scholars written a transnational sports story and shown its value in creating culture, not only in one nation but in two. Bernardo Ramirez Rios has done just this in an interesting and innovative work about Oaxaqueños who play basketball on both sides of the border.

Delving into the meaning of the sport among Oaxaca immigrants in California, the author allows us to learn how