

Editors' Note:

We welcome Jennifer Rea, Elaine Replansky Smith, and Dr. Olga Winbush to this issue. Their pieces are generous. Each writer lets us in on her personal experience to deepen our understanding of how our students learn and grow.

Jennifer Rea makes a thorough, concrete and reasoned argument in support of Kindergarten play as essential to literacy. Her powerful bibliography (Bruner, Calkins, Carini, Duckworth, Himley, Katz, NAEYC, Piaget, Vygotsky) provides us with helpful citations to add weight to our advocacy for young children. Jen Rea sees an interesting parallel between the collaborative process of Descriptive Review and the collaborative nature of Kindergarten play:

“Through the process of Descriptive Review, the teacher’s observations of the child are deepened through collaboration with other teachers or adults. This process of learning about the child, based upon observation, questioning and collaborative meaning making, is itself an example of the kind of experiential learning that we see in play. In the social context of the group, the teacher’s knowledge of the child’s modes of learning and interests is extended and enriched, just as in play the child’s learning is enhanced by social interactions, pushing them beyond the “zone of proximal development.”

Elaine Smith brings us into the life of a “special needs” teacher in a public school in the year 2007, bringing her particular perspective as a “special education” graduate herself.

In her warm, hopeful account of Deena learning to read and write, **Dr. Olga Winbush** uses her experience as an African-American educator to examine the strengths she and Deena draw from their shared culture. This story of the partnership between Deena and Dr. Winbush becomes a shining resource for all of us, regardless of our home culture (and Dr. Winbush also provides a powerful bibliography).

Betsy Wice

Cecilia M. Espinosa