

Kotilainen, Sirkku, and Arnolds-Granlund, Sol-Britt (Eds.), *Media Literacy Education: Nordic Perspectives*. Nordicom, Göteborg, 2010. ISBN 978 91 86523 00 8. 188pp., €25.00.

This edited volume is one of a growing number of publications to come out of *The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media*, which is a 1997 UNESCO initiative. As noted on the inside cover of this book, one of the aims of the Clearinghouse is ‘to enhance children’s and young people’s media literacy and media competence’, and this book’s main focus is on the role of media literacy education. The key concern throughout is to address the two main elements of media literacy education: an understanding *about* the media and their role in society, and an ability to productively use the media. The debates in the fourteen chapters of the book address these two elements from different perspectives, and focus primarily on how media literacy education should be organised within the curriculum, for example whether it should be taught as a separate subject, or whether it should be fully integrated throughout the curriculum, as the media can be seen as an integral part of *every* subject in a contemporary global context.

As indicated in the book’s introduction, media literacy is a crucially important part of the ‘information society’, and enhancing media literacy is therefore a human rights issue, ‘i.e. the right to have one’s voice heard through the media’ (p. 7). Moreover, as Kupiainen and Sintonen note in their chapter on ‘media literacy as a focal practice’, media literacy is intimately connected to one’s functioning as a 21st century (global) citizen in terms of community participation and the ability to instigate and drive social reform. This begins to answer one of the central questions of the book that Erstad asks in her chapter on the past, present and future of media education: what is a ‘literate’ person in the 21st century?

To address its main concerns, the book is usefully divided into two parts. Part one (Children, Young People and Media Literacies) consists of five chapters that together establish a clear and in-depth outline of the current theoretical debates around media literacy education. Part two (Media Literacy Education – Developments in the Nordic Countries) then builds on this foundation with case studies from across the Nordic region that each address different areas of media literacy education. Importantly, and to their credit, the editors are very clear on their reasoning behind the book's 'Nordic' focus, which firmly grounds this book. On the one hand, its aim is to broaden the academic view beyond the historically 'Anglo-American mainstream' of media literacy education. On the other hand, the common characteristics of the Nordic countries ensure that children in these countries have lived in similarly digitally mediated cultures their entire lives, which thus makes them easily comparable and a useful point of reference for other contexts. Overall then, this book is a stimulating collection with relevance for anyone interested in media literacy education, which, as the book rightfully suggests, should be anyone interested in literacy and education for the 21st century.

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