Teaching Youth Media: A Critical Guide to Literacy, Video Production, and Social Change. Steven Goodman. The Series on School Reform. Patricia A. Wasley, Ann Lieberman, and Joseph P. McDonald, eds. New York: Teachers College Press, 2003. 130 pp.

LARA MARGARET BEATY

City University of New York

lbeaty@gc.cuny.edu

In *Teaching Youth Media,* Steven Goodman presents the problem of a literacy gap-a gap between the literacy most privileged by schools and that valued by video and other media that dominate the lives of urban youth. The latter literacy is typically viewed by educators only in terms of its negative effects. I eagerly read the book, having discovered some of the potential for video production to activate and motivate students, but finding little literature thus far and even less use of this potential in schools. Video production is increasingly finding its way into secondary schools, but the classes typically follow the standard patterns of elective and vocational courses, and the few reformers who are using video production in an effort to change classroom practices and teacher roles seem unaware of each other's efforts. This book is perhaps a start at connecting these reformers to one other, and to the practitioners who can realize the potential that Goodman and others believe video production possesses.

Goodman argues that the gap between school experiences and youths' other experiences results in disconnect between youth and their schools that can be overcome through a critical literacy of media. Media literacy, involving an awareness of how images and text collectively convey particular messages in a seemingly "objective" fashion, can empower and legitimize youth. The way to literacy, he argues, is through production. Work with two groups of students is used to present the method.

Goodman approaches the topic from his position as founding director of the Educational Video Center, which he describes as "a community-based media center in New York City" (p. 2). The center works with youth from the public schools in after-school programs. Seeking to expand its reach, the center also has introduced the approach to teachers, and supported their efforts within public schools. Goodman writes as one who has worked extensively with urban youth, and has witnessed the marginalization brought on by their poverty and ethnic status. The impact of mass media on youth is undeniable, and his approach to using video production as a way to develop critical thinking and connect youth to more privileged forms of literacy and to schools is promising and inspirational.

The book begins with the author's perspectives. Goodman frames critical literacy as the method that marginalized groups have historically used to make themselves visible, and then describes a "factory system of schooling" that denies students access to critical literacy (p. 8). In chapter 1, the world of urban youth is described as stuck between the legal system that wants to control youth and the mass media that wants to exploit them. The well-documented injustices and depictions of urban youth are briefly discussed before connecting these realities with the failure of education to overcome the literacy problem. By bringing these concerns together, Goodman logically asserts that the solution is in "the teaching of literacy in a way that organically links the students' development of language with the honest exploration of the contemporary world around them in all its aspects" (p. 31).

With his subject thus framed, the following two chapters comprise the heart of the book, describing Goodman's methods through two case studies. Chapter 2 describes one after-school documentary workshop, while chapter 3 describes an effort to implement the same program as an official school course. Goodman offers multiple examples of activities and the ways in which participants were changed. The role of the teacher is emphasized, using Vygotsky's concept of the *zone of proximal development*. Goodman writes, "Being dropped into a situation with camera in hand does not in and of itself make for a meaningful learning experience" (p. 54); just in case anyone might come to believe that the magic was in the camera itself. He effectively describes the philosophy of a learner-centered approach, the structure of activities, and the task of the teacher. In the final chapter, the difficulty in institutionalizing media education, and the potential outcomes should these barriers be overcome, are explored.

The book is relatively short and easy to read, despite delving into some societal analysis and educational theory. The analysis and theory are unlikely to fully convince readers who are not familiar with them, but serve as an introduction and framing device. The activities are well described with details of particular events to promote a strong sense of youth experiences. The descriptions of individual teens, and the concerns of a parent, make the examples meaningful. Details about the struggles of planning, recording, and logging are particularly illustrative, but a further description of the unrealized potential of missed moments and teacher struggles would have enriched the book. I would recommend the book to anyone interested in expanding literacy education or exploring video production. Though the book should not be viewed as a manual that teachers can immediately apply, it is an excellent place for a teacher to begin and could well have an impact on teaching practices. I hope that this book marks the beginning of a broader discussion of integrating video production into public schools and that existing courses will be influenced despite the obstacles.