

International ELINET Symposium 2018
“Literacy in the 21st Century: Participation – Inclusion – Equity”.

July 23-24, 2018, Cologne, Germany



Section VII Teaching disciplinary literacy in all subjects – new research and practices.

Part II

Chair: Sari Sulkunen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Tuesday, July 24, at 11.30–13.00

Location: Seminar Building / Room S 22

LITERACY CHANGES LIVES.

Knowledge construction and literacy: case study of literacy practices in Finnish upper secondary school history lessons

Presenters:

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Abstract:

In the context of adolescent literacy, disciplinary literacy is introduced in many countries as one of the ways to support development of literacy competence of our youth. One argument for disciplinary literacy teaching is that it provides students with necessary skills for the literacy requirements of higher education and expert professions (Rainey et al. 2017). Moreover, many adolescents struggle with reading at the end of basic education (OECD 2016), and there is thus need to develop literacy education across the curriculum. The new Finnish curricula introduce disciplinary literacy included in the cross-curricular topic of multiliteracy (National Agency for Education 2014, 2015). Thus, teaching disciplinary literacy is the responsibility of every content-area teacher. For history, this means that teaching should focus on procedural knowledge (or skills) in addition to substantial (factual) knowledge (Rantala 2012).

In this study, we focus on the role of literacy in the instruction of one Finnish history teacher at the upper secondary school. We aim to describe the teaching of disciplinary literacy in history during the transition from the old curriculum to the new one. Based on teacher's interview and classroom data, the case study focuses on the textual landscape, literacy activities and their instruction. The method of analysis was theory-driven content analysis. The results showed that the history teacher used diverse materials during the lessons but the textbook still dominated. The main goal of literacy practices was content knowledge learning, and explicit instruction for literacy activities was rarely given. Literacy practices related to historical knowledge construction were few. Nevertheless, the teacher had a clear

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understanding of disciplinary literacy practices, showing preparedness for procedural history teaching. The challenges in the transition towards this type of teaching are mostly pedagogical.

References:

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Bio notes:

Sari Sulkunen, PhD, works as a senior lecturer in Finnish language at the Department of Language and Communication Studies, University of Jyväskylä in Finland. Her research interests include adolescent and adult reading literacy, reading engagement as informal literacy learning, and disciplinary literacy. She has worked in several international reading literacy assessments since the late 1990's, such as the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). She was also a member in the European Commission's High-level Group on Literacy (2011–2012),

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and is now a member of the Reading Expert Group for PISA 2018, ELINET board of directors and the National Literacy Forum in Finland. Currently she is working in a multidisciplinary research project focusing on historical literacy practices in Finnish general upper secondary schools.