

**The Centre for Culture, Identity and
Education (CCIE)**

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is pleased to present a talk by

**Professor Michael Hoechsmann
McGill University**

Youth and Media: Literacies Old and New

Thursday, May 31st, 2007

Location: Neville Scarfe, Room 310

Time: 12:30 – 2:00pm

Light lunch will be provided

**“Web 2.0 harnesses the stupidity of crowds as well as its wisdom”
(TIME, 2006, 15).**

Changes in access to technology have facilitated new conditions for young people to shoot, cut and mix multimodal texts, and the emergence of the Internet as 'home theater' for a global audience has enabled youth to communicate across borders and across the street. These new conditions have allowed for an outpouring of youth expression, a channelling of already latent youth voice, now redoubled with the potential of making a difference, changing someone's mind, making a mark on society.

That wildfire of youth cultural production is largely the result of the affordances of new media. For instance, youth "voice" or writing is increasingly finding a vehicle and a home in online contexts. The e-mail, IM and chat worlds are the typical vehicles, the blogosphere and Web 2.0 sites the homes.

This paper contends that a cultural studies approach opens up key questions that help us straddle the old and the new, to pay attention to situated and contextualized forms of production, to consider both authors and audiences, and to seek meaning in the words young people use. It demands that we recognize the urgency and poignancy of youth voice and embrace what is said, both the serious

and the frivolous manifestations, as situated utterances, modes of expression that stem from specific cultural conditions that may be reflective of lived realities, or may not.

Dr. Hoechsmann argues that differing conceptions of audience - incorporated into the act of media creation - produce different outcomes, that there are strong residual communicational and cultural elements in contemporary “participatory” media production, and that as young people are drawn into new forms of media practice, they draw substantially on a pre-existing repertoire of cultural meanings. I will contextualize these claims in relation to my research on Web 2.0 applications, community youth media organizations, school-based media education and youth participation in the traditional new media.

Bibliography:

Michael Hoechsmann is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University. His research interests are in the areas of media, new media, literacy, new literacies, youth, cultural studies and education. His work has appeared in various journals including *English Quarterly*, *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*, *McGill Journal of Education*, *Review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies*, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *Convergence: Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, *Anuario de Ciencias Sociales* (Mexico), and *Textual Studies in Canada*. He is preparing a manuscript with Bronwen E. Low entitled *Reading Youth Writing: “New” Literacies, Cultural Studies and Education* (Peter Lang). For four years, he was the Director of Education of Young People’s Press, a non-profit news service for youth 14-24 <www.ypp.net>. Dr. Hoechsmann is a Faculty Associate of the Centre for Culture, Identity and Education

