Voices from the Field
Developing an Ethics of Youth Media Production Using Media Literacy, Identity, & Modality

Damiana Gibbons

Media Studies in Curriculum and Instruction, Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina, USA

Abstract

This critical, theoretical paper conceptualizes what determines an *ethics for youth media production*. Through discussions of media literacy, identity, and multimodality, I attempt to shift the question away from "What are the ethical ways in which youth use media?" toward the question "What are the ethics we have created as media literacy educators within which youth create media?" I assert that we must widen our lens to revision ethics as a complex interplay of definitions of media literacy, representations of youth identities, and understandings of modality as we move toward envisioning what constitutes an ethics of youth media production.

Keywords: media ethics, media literacy, multimodality, youth identity, youth media

In this theoretical, critical paper, I examine ethics and youth media production by discussing an emerging idea of what could constitute an ethics of youth media production. In this paper, "ethics" is broadly conceived as both ethical issues in how media literacy is fostered as well as a larger *ethics of youth media production*. These are actually two ways of seeing the same term *ethics*. For most people, ethics means the rules or norms for what one should believe about the world and how one acts in the world given those beliefs. For example, when discussing how media is created, by whom, and for what purposes, there is discussion of ethical obligations in terms of the content in media (Glover, Garmon, and Hull 2011; Jensen 2008). In academic research, there are often discussions about how researchers ought to conduct research involving young people (Allen 2012; Swartz 2011), such as participatory research involving youth participants as researchers (Beals 2012). There are also codes of conduct that govern what is seen as professionalism and its ethical considerations within given fields, such as professional ethics for journalists (Frunza and Frunza 2011) and discussions over codes of ethics for working with youth (Davie 2011).

For media literacy education, leading media literacy scholars and practitioners have come together in the National Association for Media Literacy Education to formulate the Core Principles of Media Literacy Education. These could be seen as what we, as media literacy educators, believe about media literacy and how it ought to be fostered (NAMLE 2007). This

way of seeing media literacy education could be seen as general principles, but in this paper, I would like to delve more deeply into what could be the ethics behind what the principles could be when we provide youth opportunities to create media texts. I am interested in explicating how we might begin to conceptualize an *ethics of youth media production*. In essence, I am attempting to reframe the idea of "ethics" to provide an alternative view on ethics, one that moves from a prescriptive ethics toward an understanding of "an ethics," which is broader in perspective. The aim of a reconceptualizion of what ethics means with youth media production rests on the shifting the question away from "What are the ethical ways in which youth use media?" toward the question "What are the ethics we have created as media literacy educators within which youth create media?" I see the question as less about envisioning codes of conduct for how young people consume and produce media and more as a question of what is the larger structure that media literacy educators have created culturally and socially that determines the beliefs, practices, and identities as young people create media.

Defining an ethics of youth media production rests on asking big questions about the definition of media literacy, the construction of youth identities, and the expectations for truth and/or authenticity in youth media productions by focusing on three sets of large questions. The first are questions of definition: Writ large, how do we culturally define media? What does

"youth" mean? The second are questions of identity: Who is producing media? How are the youth media makers defined by others and how are they defining their own identities as young people and/or as people within specific communities? How can one see this identity construction, deconstruction, and codification in youth media spaces, including but not limited to the youth-produced videos? The third set of questions has to do with truth and authenticity: What do media literacy educators and/or youth believe about youth media production and its purpose? What responsibility do the adult educators and media scholars have to the youth and vice versa? How is that belief structured (ideology in media literacy practices)? What do youth produce given the beliefs and attitudes of those around them and what do they not produce?

What I have found is that three core components comprise the development of an ethics of youth media production: media literacy, ethics, and modality. As media literacy educators, we set up the spaces under which young people produce media, and it is vital that we understand what environment we, as adults, are creating. The cultural environment under which youth create media is complicated, and both adults and youth are under various constraints. For instance, in youth media arts organizations, the educators and directors must meet several demands from people, such as funders, other educators, community members, parents, and the youth themselves (Bing-Canar and Zerkel 1998). Moreover, there are outside pressures on the media that young people produce as they could fall under expectations of what certain groups of young people must tell, e.g., using visual tropes of gangs in urban youth films (Fleetwood 2005) or telling a story of personal struggle in after-school media programs (Hull and Nelson 2005). Therefore, drawing on works on the areas of media literacy, identity, and multimodality, I assert that youth media (e.g., digital autobiographies or community documentaries) are bound by conditions of modality. What I contend is that youth media are bound by what is believed to be true and/or worth producing within the cultural environment in which they are producing their media. In other words, youth are bound by what is seen as ethical for youth to produce and by the limits of expression itself because youth media are actually embodied, social speech acts (Bakhtin 1979/1986) as the media texts that youth produce, e.g., youth-produced films, become part of a much larger set of social interactions and expectations. It is through examining this interplay of media literacy, identity, and modality that an understanding of an ethics of youth media production emerges.

This article begins with how media literacy is often framed in current scholarship by two concurrent ways of thinking: (1) how media literacy envisions youth and their place in relation to media and (2) how youth media scholars and media literacy educators frame youth in terms of ethics and media. Then, I will move to a discussion of how this framing is enacted in youth media production in terms of identities. Last, I will discuss how modality is operating to provide boundaries to what marginalized young people can produce and why. What this conceptual article provides is a way of seeing the big picture of the different environments as well as the affordances and constraints that media literacy educators and scholars have created culturally and socially under which and through which young people, especially those who are marginalized in some way, are creating media about themselves, their lives, and their communities.

Defining Media Literacy

Currently, there are two different perspectives on media literacy that are the focus of recent scholarship—a focus on protectionism and/or on empowerment (Hobbs 2011). Hobbs (2010) sees these two perspectives as a two-sided coin with protectionism on one side and empowerment on the other. Protectionism focuses on protecting children from media's effects by teaching them how to interact with and to read the media in their everyday lives in ways that are personally meaningful for the students. The empowerment persective rests on the idea that "young people [are] capable, resilient, and active in their choices both as media consumers and as creative producers" (Hobbs 2011, 422). Media literacy education attempts to address both equally; yet, often in terms of pedagogy, media is seen as positive if, and only if, it can be the means to something else. Though there has been a push toward broadening what is meant by literacy, such as the idea of new media literacies (Lankshear and Knobel 2008), and there has been ground-breaking work in integrating media literacy in classrooms (Hobbs 2007) and other learning environments (Burn 2009), all too often media is seen as acceptable in classrooms as long as it is used to move students to an understanding of print-based texts.

Yet, there are other scholars and educators who focus on analyzing media in their own right. Baker (2011) defines media literacy and offers educators helpful pedagogical tools, such as David Considine's

useful TAP (Text-Audience-Production) Model (Considine, Horton, and Moorman 2009). Another resource is the National Association for Media Literacy Education's Core Principles, which outline how leading media literacy education scholars and practitioners help "individuals of all ages develop habits of inquiry and skills of expression that they need to be critical thinkers, effective communicators, and active citizens" (NAMLE 2007, 1). What the Core Principles help educators think through is how media literacy education is meant to help young people to think for themselves when it comes to media and then to be able to live well with others. The education part of media literacy education is the attempt to foster young people's engagement with media for themselves. For example, Redmond (2012) shows how three media literacy educators effectively fostered what she called "critical enjoyment" in their media literacy teaching. In terms of media education that focuses on media critique, such teaching pushes the field further.

Changing Definitions of Media Literacy and Youth

This view is shifting slowly, however, as the field struggles to move forward as the definitions of media literacy and of young people themselves have increasingly changed. Consumer-oriented media literacy scholars and educators see children or youth as the adults want them to be, and their pedagogy follows (or attempts to create) these idealized versions of "child." This may lead to attempts to protect children from media when they do not need protection and to an undervaluing of youth responses to media. Yet, countering this view is the fact that student agency has become increasingly important in media literacy education as students are seen as creating (co-creating) meaning and as producing media texts themselves (Buckingham 1998, 2003; Buckingham, Willett, and Pini 2010; Burn 2009; Halverson, Lowenhaupt, Gibbons, and Bass 2009). Buckingham (2006) complicates the notion of children as passive consumers of media when he asserts that now a child is seen as "a sophisticated, discriminating, critical consumer. Children have become 'kids'; and kids, we are told, are 'smart,' 'savvy,' and 'streetwise'" (30). "Child" is constructed differently, and re-labeled "kid."

Of course, though, this is still an identity placed *on* the children by adults. This can make the construction of identity both powerful and highly suspect as children do not accept this putting on of identity without question but often assert agency through their use of media (Buckingham 2006). Youth

and adults are constantly negotiating identity socially; therefore, children's reactions to media are socially constructed as well. Definitions are contentiously determined for "real[ity]," "truth," "right[s]," and defining both meaning and identity is an "ongoing struggle" (Buckingham 2006, 45). For educators, it must be understood that classrooms are not easy places to negotiate meaning, but negotiating meaning is the only way to teach media literacy education.

Defining Ethics and Youth Media

Later in this article I will discuss how this view becomes even more nuanced as one moves toward a larger view of an ethics, a view that disucsses the cultural environment within which media scholars and educators and young people create media. It is this larger ethics that I will be working toward, an ethics that takes into consideration how media literacy is defined, how identities are constructed, and how particular expectations for truth and authenticity vary depending on who is producing media and for whom the media is produced. But, in this section, I will discuss how ethics and youth are discussed in the literature, in which contemporary theories about ethics and youth media follow a similar mindset to that of protectionism in media literacy.

To most scholars discussing ethics and youth, ethics means a set of ways of thinking and acting similar to professional codes of conduct. The assumption is that the goal is to develop ways that youth can learn to think and act in ethical ways based on a set of morals or beliefs that the adults will teach them. For example, Lesnick (2006) examines how teachers set up classrooms for students to become "ethically engaged people" (43). When adding media to the mix, the media and/or technology is seen as a means to the end of students learning ethical engagement. James et al. (2009) assert that young people need to learn to develop "new ethical minds" as they learn to navigate new media spaces, such as online game play (5). Hamilton (2000) takes a similar stance when she discusses how education must meet the changing world by teaching students how to think through technology use with an eye toward ethics. She advocates that adults help children develop "habits of ethical thought" (24). Classrooms are spaces in which the adult teachers, who have knowledge of particular ways of thinking and doing with media, pass on that knowledge to the youth who lack those skills or whose skills are still in development.

The clearest articulation of this view of ethics

in youth media is the Jenkins et al. (2006) white paper, *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*, in which they claim that educators and scholars must redefine what is meant by ethics in terms of technology use given the rapid advances in media technology and our relationships to it and to each other. They describe the "Ethics Challenge" in media literacy education: "One important goal of media education should be to encourage young people to become more reflective about the ethical choices they make as participants and communicators and the impact they have on others" (n.p.). Yet, the stance does not change from the focus on how adults should teach youth to use media ethically, as the focus remains on the youth as the ones in need of ethics, while the adults are the ones with ethics who will transmit it to the youth.

Defining Identities

What the work of Jenkins et al. (2006) does add to the discussion, however, is an attempt to shift the debate about the technological divide away from a focus on access to technology and toward a view that focuses on the social dynamics and interactions that are foundational to media literacy. This turn to the social is a necessary move as we, as media literacy educators, are attempting to free up participation to make it more social, more equitable, and more inclusive. This has been done successfully in in-school settings (Burn and Durran 2007; Hobbs 2007) as well as out-of-school settings where media educators are called to empower youth to critique and (re)create media in youth media arts organizations (Goodman 2003; Halverson and Gibbons 2010). Yet as media literacy educators, we must also teach young people within particular settings and under a variety of constraints, such as building sustainable media literacy across the wide geographic distances in the US (Kubey 1998). It is no easy task we have set out for ourselves.

Identities, Ethics, and Media Literacy

My recent research has been with young people who are historically marginalized in some way, e.g., Native, poor, multi-ethnic (Gibbons 2010; Gibbons, Drift, and Drift 2011; Halverson and Gibbons 2010; Halverson, Lowenhaupt, Gibbons, and Bass 2009). When discussing identity, I saw first-hand the additional complexities with how these youth might perform their lives in their media, and I've come to discover that an ethics of youth media production must acknowledge is that youth identities are: multi-dimensional, per-formative, socially-constructed, and, to some extent, authored by the youth.

The first part that must be acknowledged is that identity itself is not static and uni-dimensional. Adults and youth use identities to find their place in the world and to give meaning to their experiences. Satya Mohanty (1993/2000) discusses how this is true with marginalized identities:

> Identities are theoretical constructions that enable us to read the world in specific ways. It is in this sense that they are valuable, and the epistemic status should be taken very seriously. In them, and through them, we learn to define and reshape our values and our commitments... (43)

For Mohanty, there is a belief that identity can be known as an objective social location but that identity is also constructed culturally. This was true in my past research. Identity was not static. It did not matter whether the teens had been given a predetermined identity or whether they had been able to play with identity by choosing alternatives. For example, one of my youth participants wanted to include a shot of an island in a video she was producing about her identity as a fancy shawl dancer (a traditional dance in her Native community), but before she could use the shot of the island, she had to clear the footage with the elders in her tribe. She had had no problem with having to ask for permission for part of her video, though, because she already felt connected to her community and she felt that the only reason she was making the video was to honor her people and Mother Earth (Gibbons, Drift, and Drift 2011). From this example and many others, I found that "identity" was *real* for the youth participants and for the adults who worked with them. When it comes to identity work with youth, then, it does not matter that identity is a "theoretical construction." Identity is a tool, identity is used by adults and young people alike; therefore, it is valuable.

This brings me back to ethics. An ethics, in this article, is the set of beliefs and actions that show how adults and young people interact with one another as young people create their own media. This way of seeing an ethics is based, in large part, on Bakhtinian ethics. For Bakhtin, fundamentally, life is performed, and it can be understood not through its content but through that performance: "For my entire life as a whole can be considered as a single complex act or deed that I perform: I act, i.e., perform acts, with my whole life, and every particular act and lived-

experience is a constituent moment of my life—of the continuous performing of acts" (Bakhtin 1919/1993, 3). For Bakhtin, we are all individual beings who perform acts and deeds that occur in a series of acts and deeds. This is life as a series of performed acts. What is key, however, is that these acts are *answerable*, which means that we situate these acts for ourselves and in particular context. We must answer for our acts and deeds by acknowledging them, by essentially acknowledging our beings (selves) in relation to the acts and to the world. We are not determined by our world, but rather, we figure out our beings (selves) as we live our lives in these series of performed acts that we try to make sense of. We answer for our acts through aesthetics, such as media, as we use it to understand these acts and to answer for them to ourselves. In this way, the act of producing media has these interplays in it as young people create media as a performed act, the adults and others ask the youth to answer for those media and its creation, and so on. It is this environment in which young people assert their identities through performed acts and the adults respond to those that make up a series of acts. This understanding of how identities are interacting is at the heart of an emerging understanding of an ethics of youth media production.

Another of Bakhtin's ideas can help us to see how youth media functions: Bakhtin's (1986) discussion of speech genre. What is happening is that youth are able to express themselves as selves, to a point, because what they are creating is occuring in a series of ''utterances'' (Bakhtin 1979/1986), which could be thought of as the way the answerable acts or deeds are enunciated. These utterances are governed not only by conventions within speech genres but also by their places within the act of communication. Bakhtin (1979/1986) states:

> Our speech, that is, all our utterances (including creative words), is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of 'our-own-ness,' varying degrees of awareness and detachment. These words of others carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, rework, and re-accentuate. (89)

Youth are expressing certain aspects that are their own, but they are not doing so in isolation. They are expressing themselves through a medium that has its own conventions. Also and importantly, they are creating utterances that are "filled with others' words." For example, in some research with colleagues, we found that young people in rural organizations create media that is more community-focused than youth in urban areas who created videos that were much more individually-focused (Halverson, Lowenhaupt, Gibbons, and Bass 2009), which means that the rural youths' utterances were more crowded than the individually-focused urban youth.

Therefore, identity is a multiplicity to which we have some control (Mohanty 1993/2000), and it is expressed through media that are partly our own and partly made up of others' expressions (Bakhtin, 1979/1986). But there is another piece of the puzzle. We need to think about identity as not only 'being' but also as 'becoming.' Stuart Hall (1990) offers a strong point by stating that ''perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (222). For Hall, there are two ways of thinking about cultural identity. One is a shared culture, "a sort of collective 'one true self'" (225). Another is recognition that although there might be many shared commonalities between people, there are also significant differences. "Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as 'being'" (225). In NAMLE's Core Principles, one of the key principles is that media literacy educators must recognize that "media are part of culture and function as agents of socialization" (NAMLE 2007, 5). This is true, and in this case, we must also recognize that what is meant by cultural identity is, in fact, quite complicated. Identities do not occur outside of representation; nor are people completely bound to identities because they do not exist as a given that is handed down without contest. Identities are negotiated. Identities are multiple. Identities are made and re-made socially.

It is in the representations in the media that youth are expressing identities and creating identities. Yet, how is identity being expressed in the making of youth media as well as the youth media texts themselves? A useful way of seeing how youth perform social identities in digital spaces is Merchant's (2006) distinction between social identies that are ''anchored'' and those that are ''transient'':

> I use the terms 'anchored' and 'transient identity' to distinguish between positions which are profoundly influenced by a long history of socio-cultural practices (such as gender or religion) and those with are more easily made, remade, and unmade (such as fandom)…

[These] artefacts and discourses related to transient identities map on to more pervasive social realities, often in quite complex ways. (Merchant 2006, 304)

Merchant goes on to analyze computer-mediated communications between children, namely images and conversations posted online, to show how the anchored and transient identitites play out in digital spaces. He found that children are ''authoring'' (310) both types of identities to one another in complex ways through these multimodal texts. What is very useful about this idea is that it recognizes that there are aspects of identity that do not change and those that can change, and children and youth are able to work with both in strongly persuasive ways in their media. In fact, children make very complicated identity choices with adults' help but also very much on their own. What this means is that children and youths' identities are not only multiple and social but also young people on their own are able to ''author'' identities in media spaces.

Defining Modality

So what does this mean for youth media production? Youth do not create media texts in a vacuum. Whether youth create media as part of school communities (Hobbs 2007) or as part of youth media arts organizations (Halverson 2010), youth create media within cultural environments. These cultural settings invariably have their own sets of expectations that govern what can and cannot be created and which stories are and are not told. I assert that these expectations are based on questions of truth and authenticity in youth media production, and these expectations are expressed through *modality*. At its basic level, modality refers to how true a given expression, text, or genre is to a group of people (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). For Kress and van Leeuwen, modality is determined by "modality markers," or motivated signs. All signs are motivated, which simply means that signs occur in a social context and that they are endowed with meaning by people according to who they are and by what people want to accomplish with the sign (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). What this means is that children and adults alike strive to be understood, and they choose from a variety of signs in order to express "plausible meanings." They know that not all signs will work in any given interaction. They must choose wisely.

I'm choosing to add modality to the discussion along with media literacy and identity because modality is a linguistic term that allows for some flexibility in its definition. It has an elasticity that can allow for complexity, which is much needed with dealing with such abstract, yet powerful, terms as truth and authenticity. Therefore, in this section, I will define modality in terms of the broader ideas of truth and authenticity, then in the last section, complicate this notion by returning to identities and how they can, are, and ought to be allowed to be expressed in youth media production.

Modality as a Construction of Truths

In this social semiotics view, modality determines truth because truth is created based on what the social group values and how they demonstrate those values through language—through the making and understanding of signs. Therefore, modality is:

[T]he truth value or credibility of [a] (linguistically realized) statement about the world…[do not] express absolute truths or falsehoods, it *produces* shared truths aligning readers or listeners with some statements and distancing them from others. It serves to create an imaginary 'we.' (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 155)

Truth is not something that exists on its own, and it is not something that exists in the content of what is talked about. Truth occurs and is created in the meanings people create together. Modality is determined by relationships. For example, if people were to hear a fisherman telling about a story about catching a fish that was "this big," paired with a gesture showing how big the fish was, most people have a shared truth that the fisherman did not actually catch a fish "this big." They all understand the shared truth of boasting about one's fishing prowess as a way to bond with (or at times to show oneself as superior to) others. In other words, we have a shared truth that what the fisherman is telling us is a lie, but we all understand that he is lying to achieve something socially.

Modality as Expression of Authentic Identities

What scholarship shows is that for marginalized youth, truth becomes even more complicated as often the overall determiner for modality for marginalized youth is often questions of, or demands for, ''authenticity.'' For example, in discussing her analysis of a summer workshop that taught teens how to produce videos in California, Fleetwood (2005) states:

[S]imilar to mass media and popular culture in the United States youth-based media arts

organizations share a common goal—a drive, that is—to document an authentic urban experience from the perspective of racialized youth... Through video, media organizations attempt to connect with and document the temporally fleeting, but discursively repetitive and static, authenticity of a racialized youth experience. (Fleetwood 2005, 156-157)

It is seen as a given that marginalized youth have an experience that is different from the mainstream: it is "urban" and "racialized" before the youth begin the pedagogical process of learning how to produce a video. Moreover, the focus is on "authenticity," but there is no indication about who gets to determine what is "authentic."

A return to Bakhtin's "utterances" is useful here (Bakhtin 1979/1986). Youth-produced media is a combination of the youths' own utterances and those of others. Soep (2006) expands Fleetwood's (2005) analysis and connects it to Bakhtin's idea of utterances in her study of how young people talk to each other when creating an art exhibition. She finds that the youth are using "reported speech," which means that "a speaker's utterances are 'filled to overflowing' with other people's words, through quotes, indirect references and paraphrases, accents, and allusions…" (Soep 2006, 198). As the youth in her study created media texts, she found that

[t]he strikingly crowded character of this language, as explored here, unsettles conceptions of 'authentic youth voice' to the extent that individual young people, in these instances, in fact strategically leverage, dramatize, and experiment with varied real and imagined voices, even in a single utterance. (199)

It is not that marginalized youth have the free play with media that is hinted at by other media scholars (Buckingham 2006; Fisherkeller 2002; Jenkins et al. 2006). Their purpose is often predetermined—they must work to record/document their "authentic" and "real" (Fleetwood 2005) and everyday experiences in the ''crowded'' discourses (Soep 2006) in media production. In media literacy, then, marginalized youth do not have limitless options, and not all options would provide empowerment in all ways.

This push for authenticity and reality becomes more complicated when there are contradictions between what the youth see as authentic and what the adults in the school, organization, and/or community see as authentic. For example, in Bing-Canar and

Zerkel's (1998) study, they describe how when they were working with young Arab-American girls to edit a video, the youth had a difficult time balancing the expectations of their community with their own desire to express what was "real" to the youth participants:

The interns (and all participants) struggled with several issues in the editing stage, generally centered on comments that were critical of the community. Would 'outsiders' or their parents misinterpret what they were saying? If they were critical of the sexism within their community, would that reinforce the stereotype of all Arabs as sexist? … Nonetheless, it was difficult for some to be critical on camera. (Bing-Canar and Zerkel 1998, 740-741)

It is important to note that striving for authenticity has consequences for media literacy that often go unexplored. The youth and adults are navigating very complicated interactions that are fraught with very real concerns of identity. Who can represent what? What is believable? By whom? What is real and what ought to be made public and visible? These are all very real concerns our understanding of how and why young people create media.

The Interplay of Truth, Identity, and Youth Media Production

So, how do youth navigate all of these multiple pulls on identity as they make their media? One way of seeing how they navigate these spaces is by studying the media they produce. One can see how modality is working in youth media in a variety of ways. Rowsell and Pahl (2007) trace how identities of children of immigrants in England are present in different layers, including how they are present in the artifacts of the youth-produced texts, such as drawings and written work. Identity expressions are layered, and the texts instantiate the layers through lamination, or a layering of semiotic choices over time and space (Bakhtin 1981; Leander and McKim 2003). In youth media production, one can see how youth media are operating in a series of utterances that express identity, especially in terms of youth video production. Pahl (2011) finds that youth are able to assert their identities through creating digital stories in an after-school project in the United Kingdom and that tracing the different modal choices children (and those of their families) make throughout different stages of the process shows those identities through the digital stories themselves. Similar results were found in a discussion of how identity was expressed and fixed

in a digital story created by a young African-American teen as part of a digital storytelling project in the United States (Nelson, Hull, and Roche-Smith 2008), by migrant youth in California (Scott Nixon 2009), with young Native youth (Gibbons, Drift, and Drift 2011), and with Canadian youth in schools (Rogers and Schofield 2005).

The idea that youth's speech in terms of media making are bound up with other people's speech does not mean that youth are unable to assert their identities in multimodal texts. In conducting social semiotic analyses of youth video production, Burn and Parker (2003) found that youth sometimes make modal choices in response to conflicts that arise during filming, and youth are able to address this conflict in their own ways in editing their videos. The youths' modal choices in their video often reveal as much about their own sense of themselves as youth as it did them as youth filmmakers (see also Halverson 2010). In analyzing multimodal texts in South Africa, Stein (2007) explored how youth identities are constructed via modal choices in her study of the storytelling practices of a Zulu-speaking, thirteen-year-old girl. By analyzing different instantiations of this girl's stories (written, drawn, and performed versions), Stein found that the girl used modes as "semiotic resources" to connect her identity to the "history and language practices of her home and wider community" (44).

Discussion and Conclusion

What this interplay between media literacy, modality, and identities shows is how truly complicated media production is for youth. Presenting identity to oneself is difficult enough, but to represent and present identity in media form and for others is especially challenging. We must keep in mind that all youth are often actually representing their lives in their youth-produced media, which means that we are asking them to answer for their acts (Bakhtin 1919/1993) in specific ways. What this means, then, is that when it comes to media literacy, though perspectives on youth and media are shifting toward a view that sees youth as more agentive, there is still a prevalent view that adults are the ones who have media critique and production skills and youth are recipients of that knowledge. Ethics and youth media are seen similarly. Adults have ethics; youth are learning those ethics.

But, when one takes into account what identities can mean for marginalized youth, this needs to become a bit more nuanced. Not only are youth under new

definitions of "kids" (Buckingham 2003), many youth are also seen as marginalized in some way. This means that though life is performed through a series of acts (or utterances), what can be performed, for whom, and why becomes more contested with these youth. The media these youth create, and the identities asserted enter into larger discourses, and the negotiations of identity for these youth are trickier than what is commonly recognized by scholars studying ''participatory culture'' (Jenkins et. al 2006), and recognizing this complexity in classrooms becomes even trickier.

As previously discussed in this article, many scholars and educators are attempting to recognize the complexities inherent in fostering media critique and production, and this article is part of this new trend. My focus is on developing a new lens to see the ethics of youth media production as a larger construct, in other words the environments created by adults and youth within which the youth are creating their media. Along with considerations of media literacy and identities, then, are larger questions of modality. In particular, we must consider the difficulties inherent in what is seen as worth producing and what is seen as believable for particular audiences and particular youth. What is seen as true and authentic with media production with youth is a push-pull dynamic in which youth are positioned in particular ways. Sometimes space can be made for youth to put forward their own voice in scholarship, such as the chapter I co-wrote with one of my youth participants and her mother (Gibbons, Drift, and Drift 2011). In this article, I'm attempting to make space for the idea that the discussion of ethics when applied to youth media ought to be more broadly conceived. It is an ethics overall that is determining what can be produced, by whom, and to what ends.

The ethics of youth media production is this interplay between media literacy and modality that fosters an ethical framework, and it is this emerging understanding of an ethics of youth media production that we must be aware of as media literacy educators to understand what we are teaching, what we are masking, and what is possible in youth media production for all young people. I hope that what would follow this recognition is more people creating space not only for youth media production itself for all youth; but also, that this space will be helpful for media literacy educators who themselves recognize this larger, more complicated ethics as they are fostering media literacy to make the case for their more inclusive media literacy teaching.

References

Allen, Quaylan. "Photographs and Stories: Ethics, Benefits, and Dilemmas of Using Participant Photography with Black Middle-Class Male Youth." *Qualitatative Researcher* 12: 444-459.

Baker, Frank. 2012. *Media Literacy in the K-12 Classroom*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology Association.

Bakhtin, Mikhail M., trans 1981. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Translated by Vadim Liapunov and Kenneth Brostrom. In *Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, edited by Michael Holquist. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

———, trans 1979/1986. "The Problem of Speech Genres." Translated by Vern W. McGee. In *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, 60-102. Austin: University of Texas Press.

———, trans 1993. *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*. Translated by Vadim Liapunov. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Beals, Fiona. 2012. "Moving Beyond the Academic Doors: Addressing Ethical Issues in NGO Youth Research." *Youth Studies Australia* 31(3): 35-42.

Bing-Canar, Jennifer, and Mary Zerkel. 1998. "Reading the Media and Myself: Experiences in Critical Media Literacy with Young Arab-American Women." *Signs* 23(3): 735-743.

Buckingham, David. 1998. "Media Education in the UK: Moving Beyond Protectionism." *Journal of Communication* 48(1): 33-44.

———. 2003. "Media Education and the End of the Critical Consumer." *Harvard Educational Review* 73(3): 309-327.

———. 2006. *Media Education: Literacy, Learning, and Contemporary Culture*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Buckingham, David, Maria Pini, and Rebekah Willett. 2007. "'Take Back the Tube!': The Discursive Construction of Amateur Film and Video Making." *Journal of Media Practice* 8(2): 183-201.

Burn, Andrew. 2009. Making New Media: Creative Production and Digital Literacies. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.

Burn, Andrew, and James Durran. 2007. *Media Literacy in Schools: Practice, Production and Progression*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Burn, Andrew, and David Parker. 2003. *Analysing Me-dia Texts*. Continuum International Publishing Group.

Considine, David, Julie Horton, and Gary Moorman. 2009. "Teaching and Reaching the Milennial Generation Through Media Literacy." *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* 52(6): 471-481.

Davie, Ann. 2011. "A Code of Ethics for Youth Work?: Notes for a National Discussion." *Youth Studies Australia* 30(2): 57-59.

Fisherkeller, JoEllen. 2002. *Growing Up with Television: Everyday Learning Among Young Adolescents*. Philadelphia: Temple UP.

Fleetwood, Natalie R. 2005. "Authenticating Practices: Producing Realness, Performing Youth." *Youthscapes: The Popular, The National, The Global*, edited by S. Maira and E. Soep, 155-172. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Frunza, Sandu, and Mihaela, Frunza. 2011. "The Ethical Fundamentals of the Responsibility of the Jour-nalist." *Journal of Media Research* 1(9): 33-43.

Gibbons, Damiana, Téa Drift, and Deanna Drift. (2011). "Whose Story Is It? Being Native and American: Crossing Borders, Hyphenated Selves." In *International Perspectives on Youth Media: Cultures of Production & Education*, edited by Fisherkeller, J, 172-191. New York: Peter Lang Publishers, Inc.

Gibbons, Damiana. 2010. "Tracing the Paths of Moving Artifacts in Youth Media Production." *English Teaching: Practice and Critique* 9(1): 8-21.

Goodman, Steven. 2003. *Teaching Youth Media: A Critical Guide to Literacy, Video Production, and Social Change*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Glover, Rebecca J., Lance Garmon, and Darrell M. Hull. 2011. "Media's Moral Messages: Assessing Perceptions of Moral Content in Television Programming." *Journal of Moral Education* 40(1): 89-104.

Hall, Stuart. 1990. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." In *Identity*, edited by Jonathan Rutherford, 222-237. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Hamilton, Mary. 2000. "Educating Our 'Selves': The Ethics of Technology." *The Journal of Midwest Language Association* 33(2): 17-26.

Halverson, Erica R. 2010. "Film as Identity Exploration: A Multimodal Analysis of Youth-Produced Films." *Teachers College Record* 112(9): 2352-78.

Halverson, Erica R., and Damiana Gibbons. (2010). "'Key Moments' as Pedagogical Windows into

the Digital Video Production Process." *Journal of Computing in Teacher Education* 26(2): 69-74.

Halverson, Erica R., Rebecca Lowenhaupt, Damiana Gibbons, and Michelle Bass. 2009. "Conceptualizing Identity in Youth Media Arts Organizations: A Comparative Case Study." *eLearning* 6(1): 23-42.

Hobbs, Renee. 2011. "The State of Media Literacy: A Response to Potter." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 55(3): 419-430.

———. 2010. "Empowerment and Protection at the World Summit on Media for Children and Youth." (blog). http://mediaeducationlab.com/blog/empowerment-and-protection-world-summit-media-children-and-youth.

———. 2007. *Reading the Media in High School: Media Literacy in High School English*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

James, Carrie, Katie Davis, Andrea Flores, John M. Francis, Lindsay Pettingill, Margaret Rundle, and Howard Gardner. 2009. *Young People, Ethics, and the New Digital Media: A Synthesis from the GoodPlay Project*. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Reports on Digital Media and Learning. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Jenkins, Henry, Katie Clinton, Ravi Purushotma, Alice Robison, and Margaret Weigel. 2006. *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*. Building the Field of Digital Media and Learning. MacArthur Foundation. http://mitpress.mit.edu/books/chapters/Confronting_the_Challenges.pdf

Jensen, Eric. 2008. "Through Thick and Thin: Rationalizing the Public Bioethical Debate over Therapeutic Cloning." *Clinical Ethics* 3:194-198.

Kress, Gunther and Theo van Leeuwen. 2006. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design, Second Edition*. London: New York: Routledge.

Kubey, Robert. 1998. "Obstacles to the Development of Media Education in the United States." *Journal of Communication* 48(1): 58-69.

Lankshear, Colin, and Michelle Knobel. 2008. *New Literacies: Everyday Practices and Classroom Learning, Second Edition*. Berkshire, England: Open University Press.

Leander, K. M., and K. McKim. 2003. "Tracing the Everyday 'Sitings' of Adolescents on the Internet: A Strategic Adaptation of Ethnography Across Online and Offline Spaces." *Education, Communication, & Information* 3(2): 211-240.

Lesnick, Alice. 2006. "Forms of Engagement: The

Ethical Significance of Literacy Teaching." *Ethics and Education* 1(1): 29-45.

Merchant, Guy. 2006. "Electric Involvement: Identity Performance in Children's Informal Digital Writing." *Discourse* 26(3): 301-314.

Mohanty, Satya. 1993/2000. "The Epistemic Status of Cultural Identity: On Beloved and the Postcolonial Condition. " In *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*, edited by Paula Moya and Michael Hames-Garcia, 29-66. Berkely: University of California Press.

National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE). 2007. "Core Principles of Media Literacy Education in the United States." http://namle.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/NAMLE-CPMLE-w- questions2.pdf.

Nelson, Mark E., Glynda A. Hull, and Jeeva Roche Smith. 2008. "Challenges of Multimedia Self-Representation: Taking, and Mistaking, the Show on the Road. Challenges of Multimedia." *Written Communication* 25(4): 415-440.

Pahl, Kate. 2011. "My Family, My Story: Exploring Time and Space Through Digital Storytelling Projects." In *Rethinking Identity and Literacy Education in the 21st Century*, edited by Sandra Schamroth-Adams and Jennifer Rowsell. *National Society for the Study of Education* 110(1): 17-40.

Redmond, Theresa. 2012. "The Pedagogy of Critical Enjoyment: Teaching and Reaching the Hearts and Minds of Adolescent Learners through Media Literacy Education." *Journal of Media Literacy Education* 4(2): 106-120.

Rowsell, Jennifer, and Kate Pahl. 2007. "Sedimented Identities in Texts: Instances of Practice." *Reading Research Quarterly* 42(3): 388-404.

Scott Nixon, Althea. 2009. "Mediating Social Thought through Digital Storytelling." *Pedagogies: An International Journal* 4:63-76.

Soep, Elisabeth. 2006. "Beyond Literacy and Voice in Youth Media Production." *McGill Journal of Education* 41(3): 197-214.

Stein, Pippa. 2007. *Multimodal Pedagogies in Diverse Classrooms: Representation, Rights and Resources*. New York: Routledge.

Swartz, Sharlene. 2011. "'Going Deep' and 'Giving Back': Strategies for Exceeding Ethical Expectations When Researching Amongst Vulnerable Youth." *Qualitative Researcher* 11: 47-69.