



DROP THAT KNOWLEDGE: YOUTH RADIO STORIES

BY ELISABETH SOEP AND VIVIAN CHÁVEZ
BERKELEY, CA: UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA PRESS, 2010.
224 PP. \$21.95.

DROP THAT KNOWLEDGE INTRODUCES **YOUTH RADIO**, AN OAKLAND-BASED YOUTH EMPOWERMENT ORGANIZATION THAT SUPPORTS YOUNG PEOPLE IN PRODUCING ORIGINAL RADIO AND DIGITAL MEDIA. SENIOR PRODUCER LISSA SOEP AND YOUTH RADIO ALUMNUS VIVIAN CHÁVEZ DEFTLY WEAVE TOGETHER THEORY AND PRACTICE INTO AN IMMENSELY SATISFYING AND INSPIRING NARRATIVE THAT OFFERS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE—EDUCATORS, RESEARCHERS, ORGANIZERS, ARTISTS.



THROUGH RICH STORYTELLING AND EXCERPTS FROM YOUTH-WRITTEN MEDIA, CHAPTERS ONE THROUGH THREE PRESENT CORE THEORETICAL CONCEPTS THAT SHAPE YOUTH RADIO'S PRACTICE. CHAPTER ONE EXPLORES **CONVERGED LITERACY**. BUILDING ON THE IDEA OF CONVERGENCE—THE MERGING OF MULTIPLE TECHNOLOGIES AND MODES OF COMMUNICATION—CONVERGED LITERACY INCLUDES NOT ONLY THE ABILITY TO CREATE GROUNDBREAKING MEDIA, BUT ALSO TO ENGAGE AUDIENCES AND LEVERAGE MEDIA IN PURSUIT OF JUSTICE.

CHAPTER TWO PUTS FORWARD THE CONCEPT OF **COLLEGIAL PEDAGOGY**. THIS IS THE BASIS OF YOUTH RADIO'S MENTORSHIP MODEL, IN WHICH MORE EXPERIENCED YOUTH INTERNS WORK SIDE BY SIDE WITH ADULT PROFESSIONALS. SITUATING THIS THEORY AMONG RELATED IDEAS SUCH AS CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE, SOEP AND CHÁVEZ DEMONSTRATE HOW POWERFUL—AND HOW COMPLICATED—THIS PROCESS CAN BE, FRAUGHT AS IT IS WITH ISSUES OF OWNERSHIP AND POWER.





CHAPTER THREE INTRODUCES **POINT OF VOICE**. THIS CONCEPT STRESSES THE NEED FOR YOUTH TO NOT ONLY CLARIFY THEIR OWN POINTS OF VIEW, BUT TO SITUATE THEIR PERSPECTIVES WITHIN LARGER SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND TO TRANSLATE THEM INTO STRATEGIC EXPRESSION. IN THE PROCESS, THE AUTHORS CHALLENGE WHAT THEY SEE AS FAULTY ASSUMPTIONS IN THE YOUTH MEDIA FIELD, SUCH AS THE IDEA THAT YOUTH INHERENTLY SPEAK IN NARRATIVES THAT CHALLENGE THE STATUS-QUO.

READERS MORE INTERESTED IN THE PRACTICAL, HANDS-ON WORK OF YOUTH MEDIA WILL PARTICULARLY ENJOY CHAPTER FOUR, WHICH DETAILS THE STEPS OF PRODUCTION AND DIGS INTO ISSUES SUCH AS FRAMING A STORY AND INTERVIEWING SUBJECTS. AND THOUGH EXCERPTS OF RADIO STORIES CAN BE FOUND THROUGHOUT THE BOOK, THOSE WHO FIRST AND FOREMOST WANT TO HEAR THE VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE WILL FIND MUCH TO APPRECIATE IN CHAPTER FIVE, "ALUMNI LIVES," AND THE APPENDIX, WHICH OFFERS FULL TRANSCRIPTS OF YOUTH RADIO STORIES.



WHILE ASPECTS OF THIS BOOK ARE SPECIFIC TO RADIO AND DIGITAL MEDIA, I FOUND MUCH THAT RESONATES WITH MY OWN WORK IN THE REALMS OF ARTS EDUCATION AND CULTURAL ORGANIZING. ALSO, AS AN EDUCATOR, I WAS THRILLED THAT SOEP AND CHÁVEZ DO NOT GLOSS OVER THE DIFFICULTIES OF DOING YOUTH EMPOWERMENT WORK. MANY OF THE MOST INTRIGUING STORIES IN THE BOOK ARE THOSE IN WHICH ADULTS MAKE MISTAKES, QUESTION THEIR CHOICES, AND FACE PUSHBACK FROM YOUNG PEOPLE.



DROP THAT KNOWLEDGE IS NOT AN UNCRITICAL CELEBRATION OF "YOUTH VOICE." RATHER, IT IS A CALL FOR BOTH YOUTH AND ADULTS TO CHALLENGE THEMSELVES IN DIFFERENT WAYS—FOR ADULTS TO STEP DOWN FROM THEIR PODIUM OF FALSE OMNISCIENCE, AND FOR YOUTH TO STEP UP AND MAKE THEIR VOICES HEARD WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ENGAGING CRITICALLY WITH THE PERSPECTIVES OF MENTORS, COLLEAGUES, AND AUDIENCES. IN A TIME WHEN THE INTERNET AND TECHNOLOGY HAVE MADE IT MORE POSSIBLE THAN EVER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO PRODUCE MEDIA COMPLETELY ON THEIR OWN, THIS BOOK FORWARDS A COMPELLING ARGUMENT THAT THERE IS STILL NEED IN YOUTH MEDIA FOR PEDAGOGICAL SPACES THAT CONSCIOUSLY ENGAGE IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, 21ST CENTURY LITERACY, AND INTERGENERATIONAL COLLABORATION .

P.J.K.