

# Michael Wesch

## EDUCATION

Wesch graduated *summa cum laude* from the Kansas State University Anthropology Program in 1997 and returned as a faculty member in 2004 after receiving his PhD in Anthropology at the University of Virginia. There he pursued research on the impact of print and literacy on remote cultures of Papua New Guinea, where he lived for a total of 18 months from 1999-2003. Documenting the remarkable cultural changes brought about by new media inspired Wesch to examine the impact of new media on global culture and to become an advocate for critical media literacy, using new media himself in innovative ways to educate others.

## INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION FOR EDUCATIONAL WEB VIDEO

Dubbed “the explainer” by Wired Magazine and winner of the 2007 Wired Magazine Rave Award for Video, Wesch is internationally known for his video work. His videos have been viewed over 7 million times, translated into over 10 languages, and have been featured at hundreds of academic conferences worldwide. Three of his videos have reached #1 on web video charts, topping commercial music videos and comedy clips which tend to dominate these lists. His first video, “Web 2.0: The Machine is Us/ing Us” was the most blogged about video in the world in February 2007 and was invited for a special screening at the prestigious 2007 TED conference. The video was also awarded the John Culkin Award for Outstanding Praxis in Media Ecology by the Media Ecology Association. Following this success, he collaborated with his class of 200 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology students to create “A Vision of Students Today.” The video was the most blogged about video in the world in October 2007, eliciting nearly 2,000 commentaries, has been viewed over 1.5 million times, and was recently nominated for a YouTube Award. He also produced “Information R/evolution” about the differences between digital and paper-based information. The video reached #1 on October 21<sup>st</sup> 2007 and is frequently used by librarians and other knowledge workers to launch discussions about the changing nature of information.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING AWARDS

Wesch has received several major awards for his teaching, including Kansas State University’s highest honor, the Presidential Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching (2008), and the College of Arts and Sciences highest honor, the William L. Stamey Award (2006). Students recognized his excellent teaching and commitment to service by selecting him to become a distinguished member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, just the 13<sup>th</sup> member of all time to be selected from Kansas State. While wildly popular with students all across campus for his large classes, he has also gained recognition as a personal mentor, winning the Mortar Board Outstanding Professor Award in 2005 and the Women in Science and Engineering Making a Difference Award in 2006. He has been nominated for Professor of the Year by students twice in the past three years and is frequently recognized by clubs, fraternities, and sororities for outstanding teaching, service, and research.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING PRESENTATIONS

As an avid evangelist for critical media literacy, Wesch frequently speaks at high schools, universities, and major conferences in the US and abroad about the potentials and challenges of new media. He has given over 20 major presentations on these topics in the past year alone, including “Human Futures for Education and Technology” a keynote at the Educause Summer Symposium, “The Crisis of Significance and the Future of Education,” a featured presentation at the Educause Learning Initiatives conference, and “A Portal to/of/for the Future,” a demonstration of his innovative learning community platform presented as the keynote at the National Institute for Technology and Liberal Education (NITLE), the SunGard CIO forum, and the Blackboard Developers Conference. In 2007 he also served on the faculty for the Salzburg Seminar on New Media in Salzburg, Austria. In 2008 he is scheduled for several more major presentations, including keynotes and plenary presentations at the University of Venezuela, The League for Innovation in Community Colleges, the World Education Congress, and Online Educa Berlin, Europe’s leading conference on technology and education. In addition, his research on cultures of YouTube will be presented as part of the Digital Natives lecture series at the Library of Congress in June.

## SERVICE CONTRIBUTIONS TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

Through his service, Wesch demonstrates his dedication to high quality teaching and learning at all levels. At Kansas State he is the coordinator for the Peer Review of Teaching Program, leading 18 top faculty members pursuing new ways to improve and evaluate student learning through “peer review” of teaching. To help prepare universities for the future of learning, he joined Richard Katz of Educause as the video producer and creative consultant on “The Tower and the Cloud” project, a project exploring how traditional university functions and structures (“the tower”) might interrelate and work with emerging technologies and services of the web (“the cloud”). Recognizing his remarkable achievements and capabilities, Encyclopedia Britannica selected Wesch for their Editorial Board of Advisors. By far the youngest member of this prestigious board, he is helping Britannica create an effective and engaging online learning environment that harnesses the emerging possibilities of social media.