& VIDEO & KIDS &

Radical Software / Changing Channels

<u>Radical</u> <u>Software</u> has long underlined the possibility for low-cost
video technology to aid in the transformation and humanization
of cultures dehumanized by existent centralized and low variety
expressive forms of technology.

We are especially happy to be able to present to you this issue
put together by the Center for Understanding Media in New York
City. By developing programs which explore uses of the video
medium with children and with teachers, the Center has aimed
to catalyse the process of self-discovery based on self-know-
ledge. In this way it has re-dedicated education to the
task of nurturing and encouraging human creativity.

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SUPPORTED BY THE NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

Editors in Chief: Beryl Korot and Ira Schneider

About This Issue

It's been a year now since the two of us first sat down to talk about doing some sort of publication devoted to video and kids. Our ideas have changed a lot since then.

At first, we simply said we would gather together everything we knew and put together a book. Fortunately time caught up with us. The more we worked in video the less we seemed to know and the more we saw that there was to learn. Looking back, we realized that in our first years of working with video and kids we had immersed ourselves so completely that when we finally came up for air, we were gasping not for reflections but for fresh ideas.

At the same time we encountered some educational backlash. In face of increasing pressures in schools to return to "the basic," we began to question the value of the new technologies. As media missionaries, we still had strong inner beliefs but no longer seemed able to articulate successfully the reasons for our enthusiasm about video. The Gospel approach had come to an end. It was now necessary for us to examine and rethink the state of two arts -- video and teaching.

To do this we needed help. A field had developed and we were out of touch with it. All sorts of video programs were operating in schools, storefront centers, hospitals, educational television stations and other weird sites from Maine to Miami and Sea to Shining Sea.

Yet it wouldn't do, we felt, to simply survey the field. Instead, we would need to locate a variety of individuals and institutions involved with using video and kids and give them the opportunity to talk about their own work.

The Things We Went Through For This

In June of 1973, we organized a meeting which brought together 15 people representing schools, universities, alternate video groups, libraries and themselves as individual video artists. Everyone agreed on two things: we felt isolated and we were having trouble sustaining our enthusiasm in face of myriad problems.

As our group talked about our feelings, we agreed that a guide for those using video in various educational environments was an obvious need. Collected resources could serve many: teachers just starting video work with kids, media artists serving residencies in schools, experienced teachers of media who want information about what others are doing, and school administrators who need to have supporting documentation for what their schools are doing.

We also felt it was important to share our work with each other before we sat down to write about it as individuals. So another meeting was scheduled for the fall. We promised to give ourselves time to really find out what each of us were into and to discuss common problems and goals. In the interim, it

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was decided that everyone in the group would invite others to join the next meeting.

Because of the support we felt in the first meeting, the two of us anticipated the second one by beginning to think about a publication. It was a problem. We wanted to get the information to both educators interested in media and video specialists not yet working with kids. We wanted to do this as quickly as possible, in an inexpensive format with some guarantee of circulation. To publish something ourselves was an option, but not satisfactory in terms of distribution. On the other hand, going to a publisher would mean a loss of certain controls we wanted to maintain as well as a long wait between collecting materials and the publishing date.

We needed an alternative and found it in Radical Software. We approached the editors, Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot, and found encouragement and support for an issue devoted to the use of video with kids. We offered to take full responsibility in putting out the issue if, in turn, we could have control of production. They said okay and we began to move.

In October of 1973 the second meeting was held at the Center for Understanding Media. Our ranks had

swelled to 25. It was a long, hard, exhausting, but in the end, a most satisfying day. Each individual and each group of people working together shared tapes and concerns. We went off feeling a lot better about our own work and a lot smarter about video in general.

And so it was time to write and edit. This is not to say that what follows in these 68 pages says it all. We are all still learners. What we have to give you in this issue are a few insights into the potential impact of video, a broad look at what's going on today in a variety of situations, and some specific ideas about how you can use video with kids. Thrown in too are some favorite resources and some samples of work.

That's the process we've gone through and you've got the product it yielded. Take this a a guide, use what you like. . .discard the rest. . . and when you get a chance, tell us something.

Peter Haratonik
Kit Laybourne

Mary Sheridan

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What Matters Most

A Collection of Concerns

There is much passion among those who work with video and kids. You can find as many objectives and as many approaches and as many assumptions as there are places where it is happening. Everyone does it his own way. There appear to be few things in common.

In introducing this section of the issue, we want to draw some distinctions and point out some unifying themes. Among our eclectic set of articles, we shall isolate basic concerns. We will try to sift-out those deepest interests and those unique orientations that differentiate what is happening, and why it is happening.

We have pigeon-holed our contributors. And this means we are misrepresenting them because each contributor works from many concerns, not just one. But this misrepresentation -- this simplification -- will be worth it if we can provoke others to search their own work and identify their own basic concerns. It will be worth it, if people will weight their concerns against the full spectrum of alternative interests as expressed in these writings.

CONCERN: Motivation to Basic Skills

The Video Carrot
Jeff Strickler

In describing what he does, Jeff Strickler's article resonates with his respect for kids as well as for video. You can tell he is an accomplished film and video artist in addition to being an experienced teacher. Yet within his writing, Jeff exhibits a pragmatic and realistic concern that new video tools be used to turn kids on to other learning priorities. This heedfulness echoes the classrooms at PS 145 where Jeff works through Open Channel's classroom-to-cable program in Manhattan. Jeff's kids, like so many other urban youngsters, are part of a cycle of failure and frustration in acquiring reading and writing skills. Breaking that cycle becomes an important goal.

"Children want to use the medium well. As they become aware of more complex possibilities, more complex planning is required, and thus more writing."

CONCERN: Educational Technology

Don't Try to Understand Media: Know Thyself
George Gordon

As much as many may try, what is perceived as the new video movement can not be isolated from the earlier and parallel world of Educational Technology. For in the end, of course, instructional television and classroom video are co-figurative. So assumes George Gordon in an article that questions

the marriage of education and technology. His questions are tough: Who does TV work best for? What is its relation to learning? Are its economics viable? With high self-honesty, George Gordon looks at the phenomenon of visual cultism and the mystique of video; he addresses the proposition of education as entertainment; he reflects on the double-edge of change.

"Fed and spread by merchants of mass culture and pop fashion, (film and video) will inevitably die in the schoolhouse. I have over the years watched countless 'brave, innovative, forward-looking' programs of televised education die in countless schools and colleges. . ."

CONCERN: Interdisciplinary Curricula

Implications of the New Television for the Open Classroom
John Le Baron

John Le Baron is concerned with educational structures and, more specially, with the full integration of video making into the learning environment. In his article, John lists the commonly held goals of "open education" and then describes a project that meets these goals and clearly places video within an interdisciplinary and multi-skill context. As part of his doctoral work at the University of Massachusett's School of Education, John directed a program called Children's Video Theater in which elementary school students made tapes that were cable cast in the towns of Amherst and Holyoke, Massachusetts.

"Educators, as representatives of formal institutions, have not seen the potential of video for curriculum development. . . (The classroom teacher) has for too long been unaware of how video can be used to achieve learning goals, especially those which characterize the open classroom."

CONCERN: Building Community

The Great Plastic Weekly Video Magazine
Chuck Anderson

Using video to create community is a theme that runs throughout Chuck Anderson's writings and his work with kids. The Great Plastic Weekly Video Magazine, Chuck's piece that follows, is excerpted from his book, The Electric Journalist. The subject of the article is the need to extend the forum in which kids work with video. The style supports this concern; The Electric Journalist was primarily written for kids to read, although, as you will see, it is filled with good ideas for teachers. We feel you should know that the specific chapter from which this article was lifted also contained information and schematics on editing, a collection of maintenance tips and a description about "video animation." Chuck is currently working on another book called Video Power. It will be about using video to effect social change in both schools and communities.

"An important payoff in making your own video programs comes in their presentation to others in your school. . . We broadcast at different times of day, to get a wider audience and to avoid being repetitious with the same crowd."

CONCERN: Development of Creativity

The Tactics of the Truth
Irving Falk

Irving Falk's article begins on an aesthetic level and ends on a pedagogic one. Through anecdote he lays bare the objectivity myth and the mystic that video somehow, has a special handle on the truth. He warns us that while the tools of video may be new, the revelations they bring won't be. We should not expect truths, we should not want them. Irving Falk's concern is that video be used as means for developing creativity and not an end in itself.

"What the student comes up with will be a face of the truth calculated to turn his experience in upon himself for a calculated and inspirational expression of that face of the truth. For in the final analysis, the tactics of the truth lie in searching oneself with honesty and discovering the commonality of thoughts and feelings with humanity as it was and is and portends to be."

Bette Korman

CONCERN: Self-Realization

Video in a Psychiatric Context
Bob Behr

In many classrooms, video is being used to help kids achieve a measure of self-reflection and, continuing from that, of self-actualization. In his work in a psychiatric hospital with high school aged students, Bob Behr centers upon this concern. His article, rich in details and understatement, talks about the values of video production in providing team-work experiences and self-expression outlets for kids with severe psychiatric problems.

"Each student's idea for taping is an expression of the self deep inside wanting to come to the surface in some form and wanting to be accepted. . . Kids feel closer to their friends in class after having expressed ideas that might in other forms appear

too frightening, too loving, or too ambitious. Seeing others act your ideas on tape legitimizes and lends reality to what was once secret."

Mary Sheridan

CONCERN: Aesthetics

Aesthetics of the Portapak
Phillip Lopate

Teaching children to be artists is, of course, shared by most of the contributors in this issue. But to some, this concern becomes a contentious issue. It is certainly that for Phillip Lopate, a poet working with elementary aged students at Manhattan's P S 75 through the auspices of the Teachers and Writers Collaborative. Phillip's interest in dramatic activities with his kids has drawn him to the use of portable VTR systems. His interest in film aesthetics clearly heightens and sharpens his sensibilities and concerns about how video is perceived and how it should be used.

"In portapak circles, the deferral of responsibility for artistic quality is subtler (than in television.) It goes under the name of videotape as a "process,"
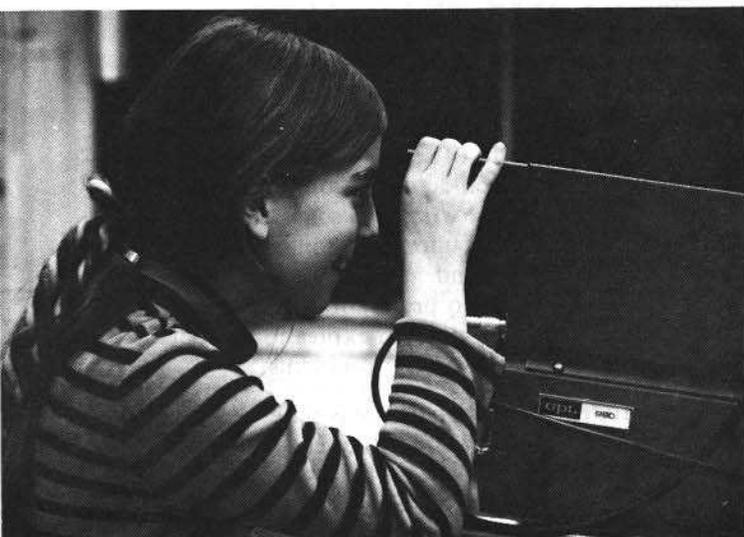
Kit Laybourne

videotape as "behavioral feedback," videotape as "the People's Medium," or videotape as "experience." All Alibis. Just many rationalizations for mediocre tapes."

CONCERN: Learning Structures

Three Propositions, Two Frameworks and
an Indictment
Kit Laybourne

Another deep concern of many using video with kids involves changing the educational process. In his article, Kit Laybourne tries to systematically lay-out ways in which video and education interface. He looks at Video Studies as a new subject area and as a communications medium serving education. He describes an integrated curriculum that structures diversity and experimentation.

"We who teach media have a special thing going for us. The very discipline we are engaged in teaching provides important perceptions into how and what we should be teaching."

CONCERN: Teacher Training

Teacher and Reflecting
Joe Petner and Susan Sherwood

One of the first applications of portable VTR systems by schools was for teacher training and teacher evaluation. In North Dakota, Joe Petner and Susan Sherwood have followed this tradition. But their goals and their techniques are quite different from earlier work. They are concerned with using video in the process of helping a teacher refresh the classroom setting for himself and for the kids.

"We must begin to focus on ways of working with teachers that enables them as individuals to work through their concerns; ways that help teachers understand what is happening to children and themselves."

CONCERN: Research and Evaluation

An Attempt at Video Research
Mitch Ackerman

How well does video really work with kids? Are there better ways of teaching it? Can you prove it is valuable to administrators? Such questions distinguish a concern for evaluating video with kids. It is a concern shared by Mitch Ackerman. In his report on a research project he completed in conjunction with his Master's thesis at the University of Maryland, Mitch identifies both the goals and the difficulties many people have in attempting to measure how video affects kids.

"This study was designed to discover the differences in programs produced by structured and non-structured elementary school workshops. The results, hopefully, contribute to the systematic acquisition of information in the area of video studies and its role in our educational system."

CONCERN: Consciousness Raising

Action for Children's Television
Maggi Cowlan

No individual group interested in video and kids has had more of a national impact than ACT (Action for Children's Television.) This organization of parents, teachers and leaders in many professions is primarily concerned with changing the nature of broadcasted programming aimed at kids. On one level ACT is about consciousness raising - in the past five years they have grown from a group of four Boston mothers to a powerful advocacy organization of over 100,000. But ACT is also about making specific structural change in children's programming. Maggi Cowlan's report outlines ACT's guidelines for better TV for kids and reviews a few of the specific actions they have taken.

"To those in power ACT is saying - clearly and loudly - that new guidelines for children's programming must be adopted in which different kinds of programs are designed to meet the developmental needs of children at different age levels."

CONCERN: Information Systems

Invitation to a Video Forum
Anne Page

If you want something to happen, you do it yourself. Anne Page believes that kids should exchange the tapes they have made. In this article she offers to coordinate a Video Forum. Anne's idea is to have kids create tapes on particular issues and then to mail these through a network of places where a class or group shares the same interest. The project is initiated right here.

"I have recently been involved with a video-pal exchange between high school video classes. The results have been so rewarding that it has occurred to me that the principle of sharing tapes could be expanded. I'm willing to make this happen."

The Video Carrot

JEFF STRICKLER

Kids wiggle and shout, giggle and wave when they first see themselves on a live television monitor. After the initial blast of self-recognition they begin to pose as tough guys or movie stars or popular singers or Kung Fu experts . . . provoking laughter and imitators. It's all very self-conscious, this trying on of images, almost a seeking to discover their own importance. Soon two or three will want to do a story. . .usually a copy of adult TV. . .or a monster story . . . or a fight scene.

But this takes organization. They have to get a space for action. How do you choose a camera operator when all want to do it? Who does what first? When do I turn on the camera? A group begins to coalesce around the task of creating a story. The action is frantic with advice or heckling from the sidelines . . .and maybe a hand or head in the picture. The result is played back. They again laugh and wiggle, or hide bashfully when they see themselves. But when the playback is finished they want to do it over, do it better, with more organization and fewer shouts and hands from the side. (And if they do it over, they can prolong the experience.) Here a group of children organize themselves to realize a goal, judging their progress toward that goal by periodic replays and altering behavior to produce desired changes. They reproduce in microcosm the kind of organizational effort used in the world around them. Plan, execute, evaluate, play, execute, etc.

Levels of Organization

More than just social organization is taking place however. The original idea changes as they work on it. New ideas come up. They must be worked in or rejected. Actions must come in sequence. What comes first? Soon arguments over the interior logic

Jeff Strickler

of the story erupt. "How can you get killed and then walk home in the next scene?" The logic of the story must be preserved. . . not that it can't veer in unpredictable directions under the charged emotions of performing. After playing the tape back, they may want or need to change their old

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plot to include the latest inspiration – or they may decide they'd rather stay with the original idea.

The Carrot

It is at this point they need tools to help organize their story – to break it down into separate scenes which come in a defined order. Here is a need for writing. It is important for them to be able to set their story down on paper in order to make a more organized videotape.

If instead of a story, they have decided to interview someone outside their immediate circle -- often the interviewer runs out of questions quickly. Then he thinks of one more question. . . and goes blank again. So. . . The camera is turned off. Suggestions from the side come forth and a list is made. Again writing is needed as a tool for the immediate purpose of organizing.

Children want to use the medium well. As they become aware of more complex possibilities, more complex planning is required, and thus more writing. Videotaping leads kids to need writing to help gather information, put it in a chosen sequence, and present it to an audience just as if they were assigned to write a story or an essay. The writing does not necessarily appear as a neat and tidy product but rather it emerges in blocks of described action, in lines of dialogue, or as interview questions. The final videotape has dimensions as a record of the group which produced it, beyond the scope of the written core. They're proud of their tape but they want to do more – and better. They have eaten of the video carrot.

Don't Try to Understand Media—Know Thyself

GEORGE GORDON

I suppose the main reason I have been asked to write this article is because I was co-author of (and propagandist for) one of the early books written in English on how to use television for instructional purposes. The first edition was written in 1960 and published in 1961. Called Teach With Television, I think it is now out of print: a "classic!" (A "classic" is a book that almost nobody bought when it was available, but is still taken out of libraries to pad bibliographies for term papers!) It was a terrible book.

All of which reminds me of a sociologist I know who responded, when asked to lecture on the subject of cannibalism, "Do you want me to argue for it or against it?"

A dozen years ago, I would not have conceived, in my wildest dreams, of asking the same sort of question about the television - education mix. Today, I am asking, and am not a bit comforted by the reactions I get. Twelve years ago, you see, I knew all the answers. Somehow, young people - and I was about fifty years younger twelve years ago - are gifted with intense brilliance in the department of answers. (Maybe this has something to do with glands.) At present, I must admit I know few - if any - answers to questions people pose to me about teaching with television and count myself content that I have, possibly, over the years, been able to figure out a few relevant questions. What bothers me is that I suspect that satisfying answers to them do not exist. (Kids just won't believe that certain questions cannot be answered! Psychologists may explain this general attitude, but I don't like their answers either.)

What questions?

Well, they are nasty questions, hard questions, "put down" questions. They are designed to quench fires rather than light them, dim enthusiasms rather than illuminate them. The faded Toronto guru, McLuhan, who liked to fancy himself a "sparkplug" of intellectual electricity, turned out, in the long run, to be an embolism in the bloodstream of serious study of communications. His motives, however, were exuberant and benign. Mine are downbeat and passive. But I think that both of us end up in the same place: stuck with questions.

Looking for Answers

Let's start with a few easy ones, and then get down to the rough stuff:

Why does video education, to begin at the heart of things, work best on dead-head students, have no apparent positive effects on average students and bore and retard the brightest ones? Is it because they think of the tube with the word "boob" rattling in their subconscious? Is it because writers and "television experts" live in the mistaken notion that God has ordained that short-take, quick-cut, visual razzle dazzle is the only way to use the blasted medium to teach anything? That the aesthetic apogee of video is the cat food commercial? That any television production studio, even those loosely labeled "educational," was intended by nature to operate as a looney bin for insipid puppeteers, animators and people who make things out of Styrofoam? Or is it because good students need good teachers - and any good teacher with brains

will be smart enough to keep his distance from the sort of maniacs who, unemployable elsewhere, gravitate to educational, public or commercial, video-land to find fame and forture?

How come a zillion (or more) studies show that kids in general do no better (or as badly) in their schoolwork when taught by television than when given old fashioned, text-book, chalk and blackboard instruction? If the medium of video has quasi-mystical powers that "open windows to the world", gather the "best minds" to spread like apple seed their wisdom, etc., etc., etc., how come the sum total of its results of teaching anything (including long-term end-products from alumni of Sesame Street), when held against others, taught in an old fashioned way, demonstrate a superiority that adds up to zilch?

Why was television education once touted by early enthusiasts as the miracle that would economize education, cut costs, use teaching talent most effectively, etc., etc., etc., when in fact, a little arithmetic demonstrated clearly that any kind of video (tape, cable, open and closed circuits) is almost always extremely expensive, far more so than face-to-face schooling? While I myself was quoting these deceptions twelve years ago, I felt something was wrong with them. I was, however, too stupid to attempt some elementary arithmetic with equipment costs, labor costs and other matters that these enthusiasts had overlooked. Why did the Ford Foundation and Uncle Sammy have to spend billions to find out that video education cost many, many more billions? Who goofed? Are they still goofing?

And More Questions

Who was the first twerp who got the words "entertainment" and "education" mixed up? Or the words "salesmanship" and "learning?" Or "personality" and "teacher?" Where is it written that because something - anything - may be able to excite, arouse, or stimulate people, it must also be able to educate them? Did the Roman believe that gladiatoral contests had "enormous educational potential?" Will you look me in the eye and make the latter claim for football games, Mardi-Gras, pie-eating contests or carnival tent-show pitches? What giant intellect surveyed a Trendex chart and concluded that because millions of Americans were at one time worshipping at the feet of Milton Berle (okay kids, ask me "who dat?"), a new era was opening in foot worshipping, that would eventually include adulation of educators and their - inevitably - none-too-attractive wares? Who first fell for the screwball canard that you can sell literature, chemistry, biology and language instruction the way you sell hair tonic?

Where did visual cultism come from, as if mankind's visual perceptions were somehow born the day television (or the movies) were invented? As if people had not been observing other people, ani-

mals, snowstorms, rocks, rivers and moving objects for hundreds of thousands of years before the invention of photography? As if the Italian Renaissance, the most visually oriented culture man had known to date, had never existed? As if the poetry and drama of a Shakespeare is not an exercise for the eye and the minds-eye, and has been for hundreds of years? As if words, villains of the misnamed "print tradition," are not themselves exercises in visual acuity. And as if their main function is not to stimulate a visual galaxy of imagery in the human sensorium - and imagination?

Who coined the term "visual literacy?" Erect a statue to him, shoot him - or both!

Who, in Arthur Koestler's wise words, put the "ghost in the machine?" What diabolical genius - or coven of geniuses - conned a culture into be-
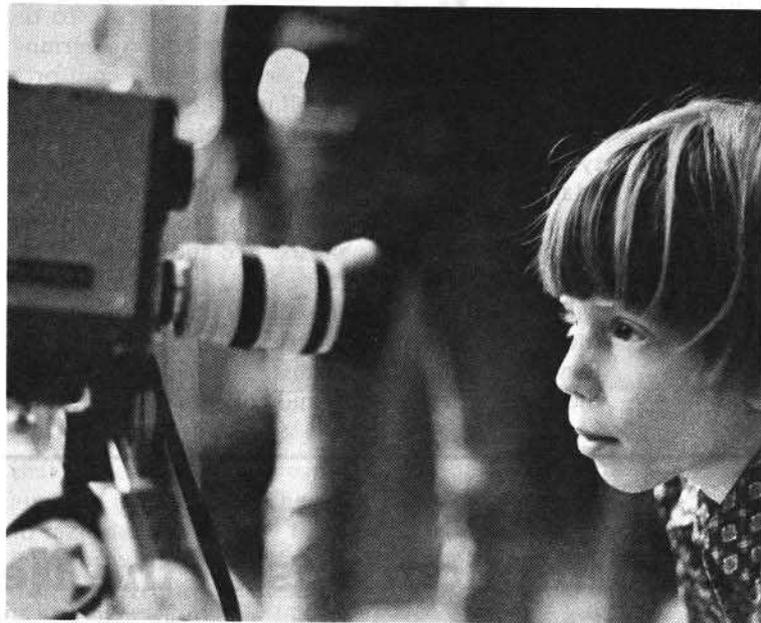
Mary Sheridan

lieving that the very technology that they themselves have created as a servant was somehow inhabited by an incubus that turned it into a master? Was it just a coincidence that, during a period (mercifully past) when opinionated idiots were proclaiming loudly that "God is dead" in our churches, these same mousebrains were muttering incantations over what they feebly (and ungrammatically) insisted on calling "media?" Why were sensible academics, newsmen and others taken in by these dregs of medievalism? (See Richard Schickel's article on this fraudulence in the August 1973 issue of More!) What intellectual devastation has been left in its wake - especially in our schools and colleges?

So I said, I have questions to ask.

I wish I knew the answers.

I do not.

Double-Edges of Change

You see, I am merely overcome by a certain weariness and sadness when I hear people talking about the power of the "media" and what it (sic) can do to redeem the sins of mankind, particularly those that have for so long taken place in our schoolhouses. I am weary and sad for two reasons: first, because I know that good intentions do not justify the encouragement of ignorance and evil; and, second, because I know that one kind of ignorance and evil does not cast out (or neutralize) another kind of ignorance and evil.

As a humanist, I do not believe that we - as a nation, a people, a world - will find our way out of our present confusions by means of any type technology. No, not even communications technology. More incidentally, neither do I believe that video and education possess any sort of natural affinity for one another - any more than I believe that books or films are related by their nature to the task of teaching and/or the difficult art of learning. If books, films - or video - are to reside comfortably in the world of schooling (and they may not), they will have to accept the morals, codes of civility, aims and philosophies of that world and be adapted, by men and women, to these ends. Left alone, they will do nothing by themselves; they are not inhabited by ghosts. Fed and spread by the merchants of mass culture and pop fashion, they will inevitably die in the schoolhouse. I have, over the years, watched countless "brave, innovative forward-looking" programs of televised education die in countless schools and colleges since the day I finished writing Teach With Television.

You see, in that miserable book, I forgot to tell those early, bright-eyed educational video enthusiasts one thing: that one must know oneself before he sets out to revolutionize anything. (I should have recalled this from my considerable study of great revolutionists; but I had forgotten.) Self-knowledge yields humility, and only the humble possess the capacity to understand the double-edged weapon of innovations: that capacity to destroy what is valuable on one side, and to cut a path to nowhere on the other.

As I grow older, I grow more stubborn. Certainly, I still believe that video may one day make its contribution to American education - on all levels. But it will be a contribution, not a take-over. It will also be a different contribution, I think, for different types of teaching and learning under different circumstances and at different times. Just how, why, what, when and where is a difficult matter to foresee, requiring maturity, wisdom and experience. I think it is a problem for teachers - certainly not for "media specialists" or people trained to "think video." I think, also, that in every individual instance, its solution (possibly a prudential decision not to teach with television) starts at home: in the good sense and honest humility of those of us who are brave - or mad - enough to face fellow humans in the role of teachers and attempt, however feebly, to help them to civilize themselves, which is about the most one may ask of any teacher of any subject anywhere.

Now, fire up those vidicons, kids. And good luck.

Implications of the New Television for the Open Classroom

JOHN LE BARON

Since the mid-1960s, a growing number of elementary schools in North America have been adopting the practices of the open classroom to create activity-centered environments responsive to the needs of individual children. During this same period, the half-inch video movement has been growing at a similar rate. Seldom, however, have the two movements met.

In most classrooms, including open classrooms, video is usually used only as a projection device. Reports of children actively using video in their curricular activities are still hard to find. This is because the video movement has developed largely outside of and frequently in opposition to formal institutions. Educators, as representatives of formal institutions, have not seen the potential of video for curriculum development. What little documented evidence there is on the application of child-created video in the elementary school does not appear to have reached the classroom teacher. He has for too long been unaware of how video can be used to achieve learning goals, especially those which characterize the open classroom.

Most proponents of the open classroom hold these goals in common:

1) The curriculum will reflect the contemporary

culture of the child.

2) Learning will emphasize the skills and abilities that enable people to function productively in their culture.

3)The tools of learning will be manipulated actively by the learners themselves.

4) Different children will learn in different ways.

5) Curricular activities will be designed to integrate the subject areas.

6) Curricular activities will build on the experiences and strengths of individual children.

7) Curricular activities will actively engage community resources, both inside and beyond school walls.

John Le Baron

8) Honor will be accorded children's work through maximum public display.

Task Forces

An illustration of how these goals can be attained by child-created video is outlined in the following project, planned for fifth and sixth grade children of an elementary school near Toronto. A newspaper article headlined "HOW METRO CONSU—MERS FIGHT RISING FOOD COSTS: USE IMA—GINATION" was chosen as the starting point. The class, numbering about 35 children, is broken down into six or seven task forces of varying sizes. Each task force works on a manageable portion of the whole production.

Taking a specific quotation from the article as a cue, Task Force One plans and executes a portapak field trip to the local supermarket to investigate some causes and effects of the food cost spiral. The kids price selected food items on camera, and conduct interviews with the store manager and randomly selected customers. Prices are compared with those of one month and one year ago, and percentage increases are calculated.

Task Force Two and Three start from a quotation which reports on a woman who, in protest, is cut-

ting meat from her family's diet entirely. After figuring out how to contact the woman, Task Force Two invites her to the school to discover, among other things, the woman's reasons for going meatless, her plans to compensate for the lost nutrition of meat, and the resources other like-minded people might use to do the same thing. Task Force Three asks the woman for one of her favorite meatless recipes and conducts an on camera cooking lesson.

The article reports that this woman's four children are unenthused about the new dietary regime. These children can also be invited to the school so

John Le Baron

that Task Force Four can explore the issue from another perspective. The next task force arranges to take the portapak to the city nutritionist who, it is reported, will mail free recipes for economical dishes on request. The nutritionist is questioned in her office about her specific responsibilities, avenues for citizen action, and food economy.

The sixth task force puts the documentary together. Each of the first five groups selects a representative to the sixth which then selects and rejects raw material from the previous five videotapes, and edits it into a unified whole.

Task Force Seven is the publicity committee. It arranges with the local cable television operator to broadcast the final tape two or three times. (Technically, this is a simple procedure.) Then, the dates and times of broadcast are publicized by posters, personal visits, mimeographed letters and pre-broadcast promos on the local CATV channel to potentially interested individuals and institutions.

Open Classroom Video

These activities have been sketched to show the potential relationship between the open classroom and child-created video. The eight goals mentioned above are met in the following ways:

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1) The simple fact that children are actively engaged in television production in the first place is a reflection of the contemporary culture. The typical fifth grader spends more time watching television than he does attending school. Child-created television changes the normally passive-recipient relationship to one of active and creative control.

2) Our communications environment is becoming increasingly visual, at least as far as media use is concerned. In our more print-oriented past, no one doubted the importance of knowing how to write. Today, however, there is considerable skepticism about the need for children to learn to communicate visually. When one knows how only to receive messages in the dominant medium of mass communication and not to send them, he is inevitably subject to manipulation by the few who are so skilled. This situation applies to most of today's kids – and adults.

The production of this documentary also builds other functioning skills: collaboration, questioning, information and resource retrieval, problem-solving, self-analysis, decision-making, and communication.

3) All the technical and most of the organizational responsibilities of production are assumed by the children. The tools of learning are certainly in their hands.

4) Ample opportunity is provided for learning in individual ways: collective and individual; visual and verbal; technical, organization and aesthetic.

5) Most of the old subject areas and some new are unified through work on this project: written and oral communication, computation, art, and environmental study. The science and technology of television production are investigated through action and study.

6) The wide range of production activities allows each child to do a job at which he or she can succeed and which is also enjoyable. In later productions children can move on to less familiar and more challenging tasks, building on the confidence gained from past success.

7) The project encourages a productive sharing between school and community. Community resources are brought heavily into play.

8) A feeling of community involvement and pride arises when the work of children is broadcast throughout their communities on local cable TV systems. The community benefits, too, when this great but underused community resource is opened to kids; the community gains fresh insights into the lives of children from the perspective of the children themselves.

This project provides a structure, but it is a structure of encounters, not one designed to lead to predetermined "outcomes." Video is used as a tool of exploration and discovery, helping children gather information and express ideas freely and creatively. Most open educators would agree that this is as it should be.

The Great Plastic Weekly Video Magazine

CHUCK ANDERSON

[From THE ELECTRIC JOURNALIST: An Introduction to Video, by Chuck Anderson. Copyright 1973 by Praeger Publishers, Inc. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.]

An important payoff in making your own video programs comes in their presentation to others in your school. This can be easily achieved if there is a closed-circuit television system – CCTV. Even without a built-in distribution system, it is easy (and sometimes more effective) to arrange to show tapes to a large audience of kids by means of normal playback procedures. Select a central meeting place (the cafeteria, a "student commons," a major hallway will often do), choose a regularly scheduled time, get permission from the administration, do some publicity and you will find an eager audience.

Now that you know something about television-making, let's talk about doing it. You probably have a number of ideas to present, and a variety

Chuck Anderson

of techniques you want to explore. Under those circumstances, you will want to select a format that is varied and flexible, such as the structure of the magazine. The basic difference between a television magazine and a print magazine lies in the use of visual and sound images rather than the printed word and still pictures. It is interesting to note that the rise in television has been matched by the decline of the weekly picture magazine, such as Life.

Chuck Anderson

Some things to think about before assembling a television magazine: Table of contents - how much time or space will be devoted to features, interviews, hard news, reviews of plays or assemblies, film clips, special reports on club activities, humor in the form of satire or parody, editorial comment, etc. The attention span and interests of your potential audience - are you preparing the magazine for the administration? Your teachers? The student body in general? Are there different groups in the school? Will they be pleased or offended by the magazine? Will the magazine help to unify different groups in the school?

Due to such production limitations as other classes, time, etc., you may find that a weekly or bi-weekly broadcast is as much as you can manage. We found this to be true in our case. Also, we broadcast at different times of day, to get a wider audience, and to avoid being repetitious with the same crowd.

Titling

The first thing to think about in your production is the creation of titles. As with printed magazines, titles are used to introduce and call attention to the main idea of each presentation. Creating effective titles can be an art. The only limitation to a dramatic title is the imagination of the creator. Good television titles should be visually exciting. They should move from one side of the screen to the other, appear or disappear just as suddenly. They should be bold, provocative, and verbally colorful. A good title catches the attention of the viewer and makes him want to participate in the material that follows. A good title holds out a seductive promise of interesting things to come.

As is the case with newspaper headlines, a good television title usually involves a subject and a verb, is in the active voice, and is sometimes alliterative. For example: "Pushing the Pentagon," "Then Came Bronson," "The Medium is the Message."

Here are some suggestions for low-budget titling devices.

1) Disappearing titles: set up a table with raised rear legs, or directly on the floor. The letters are formed with graphite, mica dust, powdered styrofoam, or soap powder on a black background. The letters are moved with a small electric fan or vacuum cleaner. After the titles are formed, they can be blown away gradually so that they seem to disappear.

2) Movie Marquee effect: attach a track to the back of a rear projection screen. Mask the rest of the screen with black paper. The mask may have a design or logos cut into it. Titles and various commentaries can be written with a grease pencil on strips of acetate or cut into long strips of black paper with a stencil. When the title is to be televised, the strip is pulled across the track, from left to right, producing the effect of moving letters.

3) Titles can be painted backwards on a sheet of glass or piece of paper, then reflected in a tray of water.

4) Titles can be rolled on a long sheet of acetate or paper. Practice makes for smoothness of execution.

5) Titles can be written on clear plastic or acetate and placed between the camera and the scene being filmed.
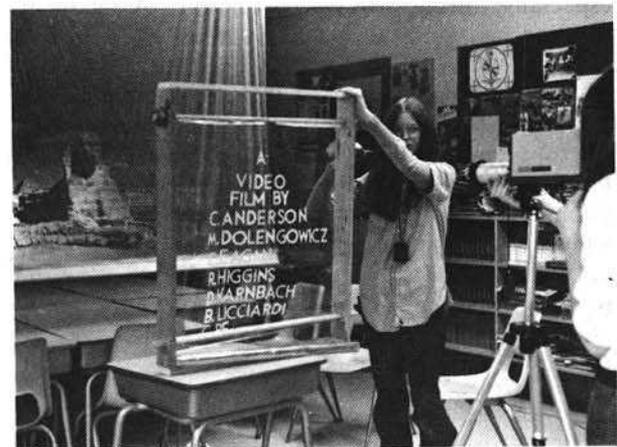
Chuck Anderson

There are many other simple and inexpensive ways to produce titles. Experiment.

Production Crews and Production Tips

The next step is to pick the production crew. Each person has to be fully informed as to his or her duties well in advance of the actual videotaping time. There should be a run-through of the entire program before the actual taping. Titles and other visuals have to be selected and prepared, mounted, numbered, etc. The cameraman should have a shot list, telling him the sequence to be followed in each

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presentation. Similarly, the sound crew should have a list of sound cues. The music and special sound effects that are to be used should be on tape, with an accompanying time sheet. Cue cards should be prepared for the announcers and anyone else who is going to be speaking before the camera. When preparing cue cards, you should use an out-

line form or just list the major points in order; word-for-word idiot cards usually lead to confusion.

Check to be sure that any special equipment required will be available, such as projectors, props, furniture, etc.

If you are taping outside the classroom studio, you should use a remote microphone with a windscreen especially during interview situations. A relatively inexpensive windscreen can be made by punching small holes in a cardboard orange juice can and packing the microphone in the can with tissue paper to keep it from bumping around. Some other microphone tips: While recording, hold the microphone firmly. If your hand moves or the microphone is knocked about, a lot of extra noise will be added to the soundtrack. Do not hold the microphone too close to your mouth; it will pick up the noise of breathing. Don't hold the microphone too close to a tape recorder or projector; it will pick up the noise of their motors.

The sound crew should prepare all special sound effects in advance of the final production. If a sound effects record is not available, there are a number of ways to produce sound effects on your own. An unoiled door sound can be made by rubbing a balloon half-filled with air. The sound of galloping hoofs can be created by using the time-honored method of tapping halves of empty coconut shells on the top of a telephone book or desk. Crumpling a piece of cellophane sounds like running water, and sometimes, depending on the context of the narrative, like crackling flames. To get the sound of hitting, slap two flat sticks together. There are many other sounds that can be created. Experiment with a tape recorder.

Puppets and marionettes translate especially well into television productions. If you are using marionettes, be sure to use a flat, black background. Video playback is especially helpful to puppeteers, who are backstage, to respond immediately and accurately to audience in street theater situations.

In black and white/monochromatic television, you should avoid the use of extreme black and white colors. Yellow, or light blue translates on the screen as white, and dark red comes across as black. Title cards and background mounts should

be painted flat black; otherwise, the studio lights will reflect off the surfaces.

You may want to make an off-the-air recording of a network television program, and replace the original sound track with one of your own. Check the instruction manual that accompanies your video system. You will probably want to experiment with the audio dub control and the sound volume levels. Conversely, you may want to take a pre-recorded sound track, such as a well-known news commentator, and create your own series of video images to match (or contradict) his words. The best way to accomplish this exercise would be to record the newscaster's voice on a sound tape recorder, then dub onto previously shot video material.

Mixing Mediums

Slides or movies can be transferred to videotape by

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use of a film chain, an especially contructed projector. If you do not have such expensive equipment, you can still videotape pre-filmed material by projecting it on a white poster board or a translucent shower curtain which has been recycled as a rear screen projection system.

If you have a silent film, or a film whose sound track is of little importance, show the film on a projector with a variable speed control. Most projectors run at 24 frames per second, and the television camera scans at 30 frames per second, so there is a lag that must be compensated for; otherwise, you will get horizontal lines on the finished video product. After you have transferred the film or slides to videotape, you can add your own soundtrack. It is interesting to change the mood or idea of the film by experimenting with different sound tracks.

Finally, there is the matter of publicity. We use hand-made posters placed throughout the school, the public address system, and our own home-made internal radio system.

SOME POSSIBILITIES

While the content, format, frequency, and style of your video magazine will properly reflect your own particular school and interests, here are some suggestions to help get you started:

1) People observation: visual documentation of the daily activities of a school personality, with his or her permission. (You will find that people are usually suspicious of the hidden camera approach and the invasion of privacy.) "A Day in the Life of. . ."

2) A special report on the senses: what it's like to be blind, or deaf, etc. Try walking around the school blindfolded for a couple of hours. Your adventures can be videotaped. You will need a guide for this exercise, for safety's sake.

3) Make a short 8mm. or 16mm. film about hands, noses, walking, etc. Add an appropriate sound track, and transfer the final results to videotape.

4) Prepare a slide/sound essay on fashions, drug abuse, student rights, etc.

5) Update and revise a radio play for television.

6) Create television commercials for the school store, the yearbook, etc.

7) Select one of your favorite poems, short stories, or songs, and dramatize it for television.

8) Using an 8mm. or 16mm. camera with a close-up lens, film the panels of a re-arranged comic strip. Write a new dialogue, make a videotape of the film, using a voice-overlay to add the fresh dialogue.

9) Prepare a series of short video studies of poster art, graffitti, or editorial cartoons. Add appropriate sound.

10) Prepare a video map of your neighborhood, or the school district.

11) Prepare a newscast, mixing local, state, and national news, by reviewing the parts of a typical network program: interviews, commercials, editorials, weather, sports, reviews, on-the-spot reports, etc. Sort out differences between hard news and feature reporting. Prepare such props as weather maps, lists of football scores, etc.

12) Prepare a quiz or game show, and videotape it.

13) Make a video collage. Working in small groups, make 30-second collages. Each collage should consist of no less than ten different shots
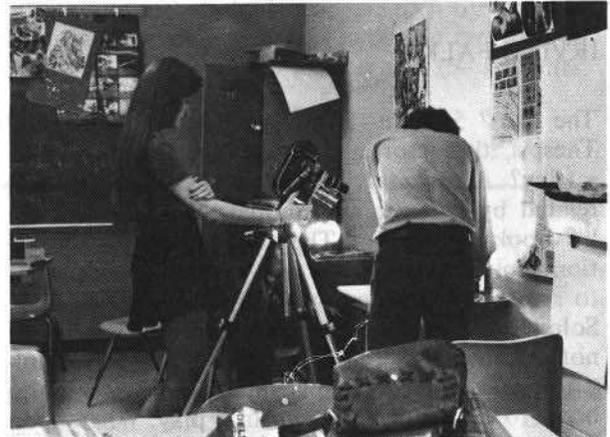
Chuck Anderson

on a related topic: student dress, protest, drug abuse, etc. Possible sources for video collages are off-the-air recordings, posters, road signs, bumper stickers, role-playing situations, and real life.

14) Video feedback art: for this exercise, you need a television camera (half-inch portable), a
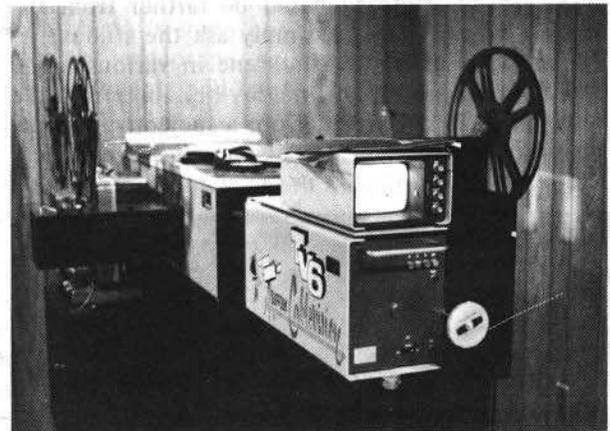
Chuck Anderson

videotape recording deck, and a television monitor. Connect the tape recorder to the monitor via the RF adapter. Turn the camera upside down. Aim the camera (which is connected to the tape recorder by the camera cable) into the television monitor screen. Adjust the monitor to high contrast. Move the camera to a distance of about 3 feet from the monitor. In a situation analogous to sound feedback, a number of abstract patterns will begin to form. By slowly moving the zoom lens and changing the F-stop, the abstract patterns will grow and change. Practice leads to control of the pat-

terns. Playing with the patterns in accompaniment to rock music makes for an effective and artistic presentation.

15) Prepare public service announcements, such as concise reminders to recycle paper, conserve wa-ter, save electricity, etc.

16) Prepare announcements of activities. In this case, the announcer should be positioned in front of a rear projection screen, and slides related to the announcements should be projected.

The Tactics of the Truth

IRVING FALK

The date? 534 B.C. The place? Athens. The cast? Thespis, the actor, and Solon, the legislator. The setting? A backstage scene between the above as related by Plutarch and quoted by A.M. Nagler in his book Sources of Theatrical History. The action? Solon, living an old man's life of leisure, went to see a performance by Thespis. After the play, Solon spoke to Thespis and asked him if he were not ashamed to tell so many lies before such a multitude of people. Thespis replied that it was no harm to do so or to say so in a play. Whereupon Solon chastened him, " . . .if we honor and commend such play as this, we shall find it some day in our business."

There is a derived caveat from Solon's remarks which still ensnares us today. Point a video camera at a scene in a street, a park, a subway, and roll through that camera half-inch videotape, and behold, the truth will appear on that tape when it is played back. Nothing could be farther from the truth. To test the idea, simply ask the student video director to shoot the scene in various ways, such as from the top of a nearby building, from the sewer level in the street, from a subjective character point of view and the lesson will become clear

to him. The truth is elusive and always will be as the film Rashomon says, or as Pirandello says in Right You Are If You Think You Are. Illusion is the condition of life and communications technology has introduced more people to more lies than even Solon anticipated "in our business." Take that same student-shot scene above and add the techniques of editing to the finished master tape and the lies become compounded.

Very often teachers using video with their students in class criticize the video product with the remark that the student has nothing new to say. This is a common complaint. It is an impatience exhibited by the teacher not with what is said (Solon aside), but with the manner of saying it. There may be some unconscious hope that the student using videotape will uncover some new universal truth not realized before when what is really being asked for is a fresh restatement of what we already know. So many of the fundamental truths have been expressed in the past four thousand years. Thespis, as well as the teacher and the student, knew all the basic hopes and fears and frustrations and ironies and ecstasies and despairs which are mankind's. Yet to each age and to each one of us, they come as if they were being expressed for the first time. Seldom has even the greatest of artists been original in his work. What he feels, millions have felt and thought before him. We treasure the work of the great artist because of his manner of saying it. In language, in dance, in music, in painting, in videotape, mastery is achieved by filtering the old universals through the prism of the artist's personality so that we see the old truths with new vividness. Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Donne, Goethe, Tolstoy, all said nothing about the deepest concerns of man which mankind did not already know or feel. But what they said, they said in such a way that mankind's apprehension of these concerns were quickened — our emotional and intellectual batteries were re-charged.

Process of Truth

Frustration has been a theme throughout the long history of creative work. Few artists have given it as eloquent expression as Shakespeare did in Macbeth's "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow."

Mary Sheridan

However, we may be sure that artists will continue to tackle the theme of frustration. Here is a good cue for the teacher in assigning the use of video technology to a student creator: let him express his view of ambition, of honesty, of frustration, of parental love – any and all the emotions common to any and all of God's children. What the student comes up with will be a face of the truth calculated to turn his experience in upon himself for a calculated and inspirational expression of that face of the truth. For in the final analysis, the tactics of the truth lie in searching oneself with honesty and discovering the commonality of thoughts and feelings with humanity as it was and is and portends to be. It is basic to the new structuralism so effectively espoused in child-learning by Piaget and Levi-Strauss which in essence is finding relationships between separate phenomena, schematizing them in a communicable way, testing them with the tools of validity and reliability from the natural sciences, discovering the organizational pattern between the parts and the whole, and moving from a particular discipline to inter-disciplinary inquiry to discover their underlying principles. The videotape then and its new technology is simply another small step in trying to mobilize our energies in uncovering the tactics of the truth. Videotape is limited in its use by teachers and students not so much by its technological characteristics as it is by the creative, inspirational tactics of the teacher and the students.

In the end, the truth will out.

Video in a Psychiatric Context

BOB BEHR

I have been teaching in a high school in a psychiatric hospital for nearly four years. When I've had the chance to videotape, the results have been very exciting. My students clearly get a lot of benefits from videotape with its larger-than-life command of a classroom, its instant feedback, and its use of the human mind and body as a resource. But videotape has special importance for kids with severe psychiatric problems because of the lively and close relationships it creates among them.

The teenagers who come to my classes present a wide spectrum of personalities - some very frightened and withdrawn, some extremely active and impulsive, others out of touch with the "real" world, and still others who are quite secure in the classroom but have difficulties in other areas of their lives. What they have in common is uncertainty in knowing and accepting themselves and in dealing harmoniously with other people. I have learned that a group experience with videotape can lessen these uncertainties because of two opportunities videotape offers: 1) The chance, while producing a tape, as part of a team, to choose the task you are most comfortable in carrying out; and 2) The chance to express creatively one's ideas and to experience yourself and others as you "live" an idea on tape.

The Role of the Team

When a group makes a tape, people need each other.

Once the students have decided to do a tape together and have a direction, a variety of needs arise. In my experience, I have tended to encourage my students to choose the task they can do best and in addition ask, (or occasionally require), them to experiment with tasks they feel less confident with. As deadlines appear, scripts must be written, machinery operated, roles acted. When one person completes his part of the job, others feel the need to do theirs - otherwise, the activity will lose its meaning. When a kid has something to do that is his own, he sees himself and others in clear definition. He begins to understand his usefulness contribute to his developing esteem. In a group where there is some positive feeling (and the presence of videotape equipment often generates that!), students will try to cooperate with each other.

Even among students, who often feel incapable of achieving very much - both individually and especially as part of a team - there is usually something each student can do well. One boy who felt he had very little creative ability quickly learned to operate the equipment and do some repairs. He became invaluable to his class. A girl who was insecure about script-writing and absolutely terrified of being on camera agreed - when we needed her - to operate the camera. Students who can write, draw, act, do sound effects, or even watch the clock are all needed.

Kids can feel their effectiveness as soon as they begin. If you carefully avoid the "star" system, each student's contribution can be as valuable as the next and students learn to respect each other for this. In a sense the tape is the star.

Group Expression

When given the opportunity to brainstorm, kids come up with ideas for tapes that reach out for assurance or contact with others. One boy would frequently take off his shirt to see his muscles and

carefully question the rest of us about whether or not he was getting fat. He would also stick his finger out through his pants and wiggle it, making it look very much like the real thing. Some students put the camera on their friends, more I think to check out their responses than to get the picture itself. These spontaneous outbursts of inner feelings help everyone become more comfortable with themselves and each other.

Our equipment is not portable so we are restricted to studio work. Students come up with stories or vignette sequences that are rich with fantasies and fears of violence, love, power and death. A girl writes a script about finding a lover. Or, a timid boy acts out a murder. On another tape, a boy tries to attract a girl and when she rejects him - poof! - he makes her disappear.

Sometimes something is said about relationships within the class if the student himself chooses who is to perform on his tape. Some students' tapes force intimacy by staging fights, or love scenes, or by having students show more of their bodies than they usually do.

Each student's idea for taping is an expression of the self deep inside wanting to come to the surface in some form and wanting to be accepted. Whether the individual knows it or not, this happens. Since dramatic tapes are conceived of as entertainment and, in successful ones, there is joy shared in the producing, even the most repulsive fantasies can in the end be accepted as human. Kids feel closer to their friends in class after having expressed ideas that might in other forms appear too frightening, too loving, or too ambitious. Seeing others act your ideas on tape legitimizes and lends reality to what was once secret.

There is a strong need among psychiatric patients to feel useful enough to perform a task and to feel equal to other people in doing and thinking what comes naturally. Very few other activities in mv experience have been as compelling and have offered so much toward these needs as has the use of videotape.

Aesthetics of the Portapak

PHILLIP LOPATE

The portable videotape camera-and-tape deck system, or "portapak," has been called by some, the most revolutionary breakthrough in media since Gutenberg. From the evidence of the ½ inch videotapes produced so far, this remains to be seen; yet it is easy to understand the enthusiasm of portapak fanatics, if not always to agree with them. The portapak represents a simple-to-operate technology which can come into the hands of a large number of users. One portapak can go a long way in a community if used democratically. Moreover, it makes it possible for one person to be the producer, director, and cameraperson of a videotape.

Visceral Documentaries

The excitement of shooting on location is like that shiver once produced in audiences by neo-realist cinema, when the historical conditions of liberated Italy forced a kind of shooting on the run, as filmmakers went into the streets and seemed to find fresh material everywhere. Portapak users have accomplished something equivalently new in documentary work by uncovering corners of neighborhood life that had always been neglected by professional crews.

However, where Rossellini or, later, direct-cinema documentarists like Leacock were able to mediate fresh footage into an intelligent narrative whole, the average portapak cameraman fritters away novel subjects because he does not know what he is looking for. Panning a hand-held camera from face to face, from store to street, he tries to make the eye do all the selective work instantaneously that the brain should be in on. Videotape, by the ease with which it can be kept running, encourages the operator to find solutions through a reaction to visual stimuli as they are thrown at him. The impulse is to forego preliminary analysis and "dig into reality." The fact that the reality captured in this way is only as subtle as an individual's defensive reaction time does not get questioned.

Let us take the example of a birthday party. (But a protest march or a street fair would be just as good.) The tendency is to shoot into the thick of things. But greatest density also yields greatest overlap of planes, and since the video camera is poor at giving depth perspective, you get low definition information when you play back. It would be wise for the user to take two or three seconds extra to analyze what details are worth recording. Yet the anxiety to get it all down leads to a rapid glossing over of surfaces. The familiar figure-8 eye movement which is a natural way to look at crowds is not necessarily a good way to convey visual information to an audience. In hand-held portapaks, the emphasis is placed on having the camera follow the path of the eye. The only problem with this is that the taped image can never duplicate what the

eye sees. For one thing, the cameraman is positioned in a 360 degree setting and is aware, through peripheral vision, of objects that will never get on the tape. For another, the portapak user unconsciously supplies more three-dimensionality than will emerge on the taped image. And we cannot even go into the vagaries of framing, since whatever appears on the borders of a televised image differs from one set to the next. In short, what you see is not necessarily what you get.

the habit of working with available natural lighting. This produces a "sameness" in lighting tone which links many videotapes to each other, as if part of a visual family. It would be risky to attempt to generalize about this lighting tone, but I would say that it inclines toward a Confucian medium. Sharp contrasts, the highs and lows, sculptural and three dimensional shadowing as well as crepuscular delicacies are all lost on it; in the same way that the subtleties of night scenes in old movies are

Dan Edelman

Some advocates of portapak videotaping seem to feel that the biological closeness between camera and operator create a warmth which makes up for whatever difficulties in following the action may result. And indeed, an umbilical connection between camera, eyepiece and user is one of the main aspects of the portapak style. This has been shown to greatest advantage in certain dance videotapes, when the cameraman has entered into the mood of the movement (not necessarily mimicking as flowing with the thing recorded) so that dance and camera become harmonious. One cameraman told me that all the shots in his videotape were based on a sequence of Tai Chi movements. This may be more fun to shoot than to watch.

The portapak, as it has been used so far, has a pro-visceral and anti-intellectual bias. Which may be one of its charms. But we should keep this in mind when claims are made that the videotape image manages an objective description of reality.

Lighting

The standard, black and white portapak camera is quite good at registering an image in almost any lighting situation. There is often no need to bother with studio lights, and so videotape users get into

washed away by a uniform blur when televised.

On the other hand, domestic interiors videotaped in daylight have a vivacity which film often lacks. The camera drinks in kitchens, sofas, schoolroom sunlight. The world of the afternoon is Videotape's dominion. One is pulled in videotape toward a normative or everyday quality of light, which those with a hunger to believe in a normal world would call realistic. Natural lighting is often very beautiful and satisfying. The only regret is that by ignoring the art of lighting we encourage that passivity of mind which is satisfied with anything the videotape camera registers, and deny the medium an expressive potential.

Scale and Depth of Field

The videotape image is domestic, intimate, quotidian. Not only is TV a home medium but the subjects it treats most relaxedly are familial, or warmed-over until they become familial. Films distort by giving the human body a majesty and monumental luminosity it cannot live up to in real life. TV distorts the other way: everything is made homey, slightly mediocre, understandable, human-all-too-human. Johnny Carson and Dick Cavett are television personalities who could never be movie

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stars. To pass from TV to film is like Gulliver traveling from the Lilliputians to the land of giants.

Even government leaders who commit astonishing acts of terror on the world are curiously non-threatening, like Howdy-Doody puppets. How can we take their menace seriously when they are ten or at most twenty inches big?

Not only the human body, but everything in Nature is made underwhelming. The Grand Canyon is reduced to a few sine curves. The videotape image is a bit like a papier-mache diorama. The viewer must work harder to achieve an illusion of three-dimensionality, because video photography is less able than film photography to achieve depth of field.

The importance of deep-focus photography has been an aesthetic issue in film criticism ever since the early 1940s. Andre Bazin, the great French critic, argued that films which opened up the plane of focus like Citizen Kane were a gain in the presentation of reality, because they allowed the spectator to follow actions within a spatial continuity, "a unity of time and place." Montage, which selects the significant detail preliminarily for the viewer, was replaced by a more fluid camera style that panned or tracked the characters from room to room in long-duration takes. Thus depth of focus gave the spectator more freedom, like the theater-viewer, to choose which part of the picture was significant.

One can argue with Bazin's assertion that deep-focus filmmaking automatically brings us closer to reality. But in one sense the argument seems true: depth of focus reunited characters with their backgrounds, their physical environment. Architecture, ceilings, windows, furniture -- the trappings of history became the objective envelope in which a man's destiny, however private or idiosyncratic (like Kane's) would have to unwind. No longer would it be easy to divorce a man's aspirations from his time and milieu – which, from the standpoint of historical consciousness was something to be pleased about.

A Drama of Faces

If we are at all sympathetic to the deep focus viewpoint, then videotape would seem to be a step away from realism. The background definition is very slight. The portapak camera systems give little information beyond the central subject. The viewer supplies his own backgrounds largely through memory: a blur of faces at the ball game connotes a crowd; a corner of a kitchen table conjures up an apartment.

Most videotape scenes begin with a medium shot of the subject or subjects from the stomach up. Then a zoom into one of the faces. A love of faces is not compulsory for videotape work, but it helps. There is the tendency to isolate the face in its flower-like separateness (separate not only from the surround-

ing environment, but from the trunk of the body.) The frown lines on the brow seem to be struggling to convert themselves into words issuing from the lips.

It is with this stumbling struggle to articulate that the viewer identifies, and that gives videotape much of its shock of recognition.

The popularity of soap operas is directly linked to this dramatic struggle to say the unsayable – to turn thought into confession. The camerawork, which is fairly stylized, promotes the sensation of the stress and difficulty of interaction, with its constant threat of a misunderstanding, through a pattern of closeups and reverse shots. The tension is built up by cutting from one closeup to another, including having the frowning actor digest words spoken off screen, until a release takes place through a shot combining both figures.

The persuasiveness of the soap opera in the face of its obvious plot absurdities, comes largely from the camerawork which hits at the viewers' anxieties about interactional misunderstandings, by denying the spatial connection between one man and another, by isolating each in his inner mood.

Consider another afternoon television show, the Watergate Hearings. The hearings illustrate some of the problems of respecting spatial continuity in videotape reportage. Because of the physical setup of the committeeroom it would be difficult to combine both accuser and accused in a single angle. Moreover, this is probably not even seen as desirable. The drama is built out of alternating close-ups, inquisition and response (as in Dreyer's Passion of Joan of Arc.) Thus, although witnesses and investigators are in the same room they do not seem to occupy the same shared space. The implication grows that they are on different moral planes or from different galaxies - a dangerous impression, however much the camerawork, or our own sympathies might lead us to think.

The split screen device, with its black line running down the middle, if anything exaggerates the box-like isolation of the two sides: Haldeman/Baker; Demon/Knight, depending on how your prejudices run. The split screen image eerily isolates both men in another way: neither subject is engaging the other's eye contact within the frame.

Videotape and the Look of Reality

Many people who use videotape for the first time marvel at how "true to life" it looks. It is not only their excitement that a picture of any kind came out. It is also that they feel their own lives have that texture, that lighting, that peculiarly flat grey-and-whiteness they are looking at.

Yet nothing is more tricky in art or popular culture than the assumption that one has finally got hold of a mirror of reality. A technological improvement, a change of fashions make audiences

fickly dissatisfied with the old, 'impoverished reality.' (Stereo speakers will sound tinny next to quad. The Elia Kazan-Rod Steiger brand of drama, which had seemed the very meat of realism in the 1950s, now looks hammy.)

I have maintained that in scale, depth of focus, lighting, camera movement, editing and other ways, the videotape image severely distorts reality. That we accept it generally as a truthful picture of the world testifies to our internalizing a number of highly contrived (if persuasive) conventions and translating them through wishful thinking into an approximate verisimilitude.

The automatic and unquestioning use of videotape as· a reliable documenting agent by government, educational institutions, hospitals, etc. may be bizarre, but it will persist as long as these distorting factors remain invisible. Still it seems a shame for group therapists and psychologists to turn wholeheartedly to videotape as a magic mirror capable of reflecting back a person's behavior and thus modifying it, when they have not taken into consideration certain crucial subjectivities and inaccuracies that creep into the videotape record.

Let me say then that videotape lies. As photographs lie, as movies lie. What next? The future of videotape as an objective witness may be destroyed, but its career as an art medium may have only begun.

Television has been in existence for over twenty-five years – videotape for over ten, and it has still not generated an artist of the originality and stature of a Griffith or an Eisenstein. The question is not whether videotape is an art form. It is undoubtedly that; but one practiced carelessly, and almost unconsciously. "Television is a stream of under-selected images," wrote Susan Sontag. In "big-time" television, dominated by sponsor economics, there is a constant deferral of responsibility as to who will make that final selection. There are plenty of directors and producers, but virtually no auteurs or creators.

In portapak circles, the deferral of responsibility for artistic quality is subtler. It goes under the name of videotape as "process," videotape as "behavioral feedback," videotape as "the People's Medium," videotape as "folk art," videotape as "experience," or videotape as "training people to operate videotape." All alibis. Just many rationalizations for mediocre tapes.

I would hope that the initiative for developing videotape as an art form would emerge from the independents: that is to say, anyone who can lay hands on a portapak. But before that promise can be realized it will be necessary for videotape enthusiasts to approach their job with more rigor. They will need to analyze and to question the images they are getting, like the best of the experimental filmmakers (Straub, Godard, Michael Snow); they will need to break the seductive spell of a technology that seems only too happy to control itself and a "realism" that is at bottom, false.
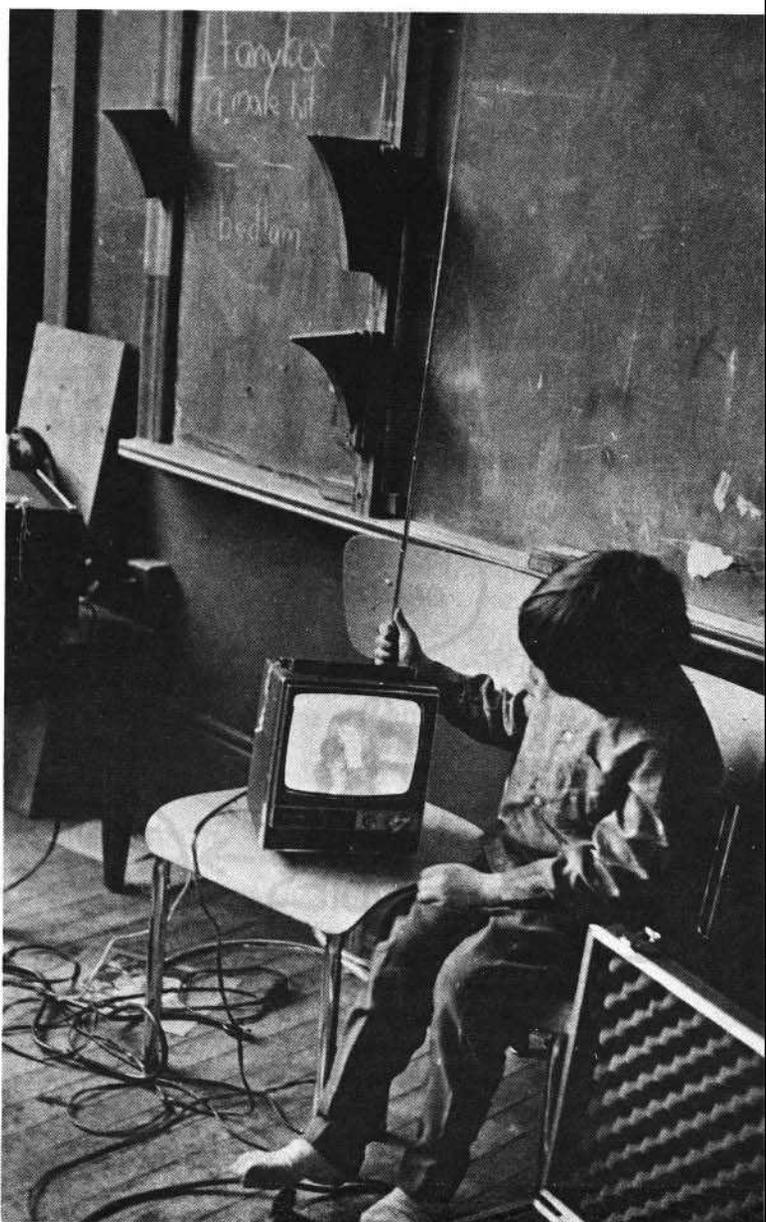
Mary Sheridan

Three Propositions, Two Frameworks and an Indictment

KIT LAYBOURNE

PROPOSITION ONE: Redefining Survival Skills

Understanding Media is a Basic Skill. The tradition-al three R's simply no longer constitute the core curriculum of things that kids need to know about if they are to make it in our society. There are en-tirely new sets of perceptual, critical and creative skills. No medium is more important for kids to understand than video.

PROPOSITION TWO: The Importance of Interface

Using video with kids means more than extending programs in the Communications Arts. Similarly, the interrelationship of video to existing instruc-tional rubrics (and to the traditional basic skills) needs to be explored from a broader perspective than the familiar Audio-Visual frameworks have al-lowed. Video should be used to fuse separate disci-plines and to reintegrate school and community.

PROPOSITION THREE: How You Teach Is What You Teach or Watch Out for Hidden Structures

We who teach media have a special thing going for us. The very discipline we are engaged in teaching provides important perceptions into how and what we should be teaching. We must use video to ex-tend the options for learning.

FRAMEWORK I

Video as Something to Know About and as a Way of Knowing

This framework seeks to help a teacher in figuring out what kids should know about television and vi-deo. By outlining four broad teaching units, the framework points out concrete concerns from which learning experiences can be designed. Exam-ples of specific activities are not included here.

1) Knowing Oneself: Defining a Video Self

A first priority in teaching video should be ground-ing each learner within his or her own realm of ex-perience. Kids ought to be provided with activities that help them gauge their own facilities in video-related skills and that help them perceive the role television plays in their lives.

Gauging Facilities

Learning about any medium is, in a sense, contin-gent upon learning how one learns. The teacher, then, should design learning experiences that cover all facets of video communications. The goal here is for kids to try on many different video-making and video-studying roles - being a "critic," a "writer," a "cameraperson," a "director." But the teacher should also invent rituals through which kids can reflect upon the meanings of these experiences. Kids need to track their relative facility and interest in doing different tasks. From this they can fashion a realistic portrait of themselves as video people. It should be a tentative portrait however - continuing work will let kids test further their sense of profi-ciency; amplifying skills that are already good, strengthening those which are weak.

Here is a checklist of specific skill groupings that might be included: working with hardware, script-ing-conceptualizing, interviewing, analyzing video productions, directing productions, measuring im-pact upon audience, acting, researching, editing vi-deotape. And you could list more.

There are other important dimensions of working with video in which kids need to gauge their facili-ty: working styles (tenacity, independence, re-sourcefulness), group-relations abilities (working a-lone, or with others, following and leading), obser-vational skills (listening, being aware of the needs

of others, processing elements of group dynamics).
And more.

Perceiving Dependencies and Options

Television is such a pervasive constituent in the life
of today's youngsters that they have no awareness
of its scope. The technological media of communi-
cations and environment mold us in ways that we
do not see. Video Studies must try to carry the
idea that "the medium is the message" past the
threshold of perception. By helping our students
look at themselves and their work in new ways, we
can work the epiphany that accompanies seeing
new patterns to something more important – con-
sciously molding patterns for oneself.

So an early necessity in teaching video is helping
kids discover what role TV watching plays in their
lives. Also, what is the full spectrum of television's
opportunities for information, entertainment and
and interaction. Hardware isn't necessary in devi-
sing activities that address this need.

2) Learning the Turf: TV Study

With an understanding of themselves as video con-
sumers, students are ready to participate in a more
formal study of the television medium. Two per-
spectives can help the teacher discover ideas that
will lead the kids in understanding television.

Surveying Local Broadcast Institutions

This is a "micro" perspective that includes study of
local video mediums. Kids should examine who
controls these institutions, the jobs existing within
each, what service they provide the community,
what programming they carry and should carry, the
audience being reached and what effect the pro-
gramming has both in terms of "content" and
"massage."

Defining TV as Mass Communication

This is a "macro" perspective. The emphasis is on
discovering larger patterns and issues which tie the
medium into society as a whole. Concerns here
might include these topics: what is the history of
the medium; what is the nature of national net-
work broadcasting; who regulates the medium;
can new technological developments expand and
alter TV; how has the medium effected our cul-
ture; what ought its future be?

3) Choosing Weapons: VT Making

The content of a new medium is the form of an old
medium. For the most part, television today car-
ries the forms that were developed for earlier dra-
ma, radio, motion picture and newspaper mediums.
In using portable and simple-to-operate video sys-
tems, most of us (like broadcasters) tend to use the
medium from the perspective of these older,
known mediums. To a certain extent, this is fine:
kids ought to be provided with experiences that
promote their criticial and creative competencies

with regard to current television forms. At the
same time, we need to be particularly sensitive to
the unrevealed potentials of this new medium. It is
clear that portable video systems can do things that
no other medium can do. We need to create oppor-
tunities and tolerences for our students to explore
and chart the full domain of videotape.

Production Modes

Here is a checklist of production modes that kids
should be introduced to: Dramatic (theater games,
improvisations, original teleplays, adaptations of
stage productions); Documentary (studies of o-
ther cultures and sub-cultures, portraits of friends
and institutions, investigative reporting on school
or community issues); Bio-Documentary (self-por-
traits, studies of own family and peer groups, re-
flections on facets of one's own culture and envi-
ronment); Group Processing (role-playing, values
clarification games, ethnography of the video class,
tape exchanges with kids in other programs at o-
ther locations); Journalistic (street-shooting, in-
depth interviews with playback to subject, school
newscasting); Experimental and Non-Figurative
(video-feedback, collage and resynthesis of broad-
cast materials, non-narrative studies of motion,
time, place); Mixed Media (tapes designed for use
within other performing contexts – music, dance
theater, recitation, the plastic arts.)

4) Making Changes: Purposeful Video

The focus now turns outward. Emphasis falls on lo-
cating a problem and then trying to effect it in
some known way. The process here centers on the
concept of a "student-task force" and it incorpo-
rates four active phases: research, production, pre-
sentation and evaluation.

This final portion of the framework ties together
the preceding ones. Much exploration of various
"study" and "making" facets of Video Studies has
equipped students to use their new critical and cre-
ative skills for a purpose. Working as a group, they
put their artistries and understandings to task,
They use video to communicate a message of their
choice to a specific audience outside the class. The
criteria for success become objectified and concise -
of effecting real change.

FRAMEWORK II

Video as a Communication Tool Serving Education

It is not enough that video and television enter the
curriculum as a new and legitimate subject. Video
should be used for the purpose of breaking down -
not reinforcing - the anachronistic structure of our
schools.

Here then is another very short framework. It pro-
scribes another set of concerns that ring those of
the preceding framework.

SELF

MIRROR FOR SELF-REFLECTION — KNOWING ONESELF — INTERDISCIPLINARY

VIDEO MAKING — TELEVISION STUDIES

MAKING CHANGES

ACCESS TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES — INTRA-SCHOOL INFO SYSTEMS
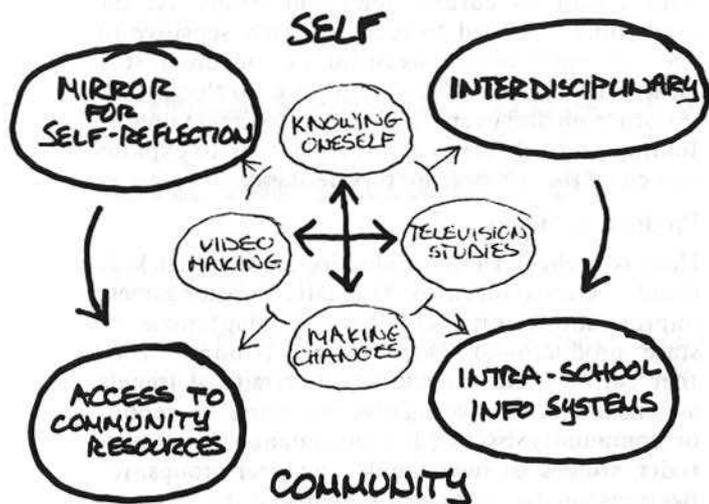
COMMUNITY

1) Interdisciplinary Tool

In the degree that video joins reading, speaking, listening and writing as an integral part of the Communication Arts, it can become a constant presence in any teaching situation. Because video is a tool for gathering, processing, and presenting information, it can be placed within any of the traditional curricula. But more, it can fuse what are implicitly presented to kids as distinct and unrelated fields of knowledge. Projects can be designed that use video to wed, say, athletic programs and the English class or political campaigns to social studies or science field trips to journalism classes.

2) Intra School Information Systems

Parents, teachers, students and administrators need to stay in touch with each other. Either used alone or programmed into existing closed-circuit systems, video can serve the needs of a school's community to keep itself informed. We tend to forget sometimes video's capabilities to store and re-cycle information.

3) A Mirror for Self-Realization

Video is a therapeutic tool. It has important uses in helping individuals or groups gain more objective access to their own behavior and feelings. Video tools have important applications in areas of student counselling and in on-going teacher development. The ability of videotape to capture learning interaction is such that it will be necessary for many teachers to develop completely new skills in effectively utilizing this dimension of video.

4) Access to Community Resources

With video the real (reel) world can enter the classroom. Making tapes necessarily turns kids to resources and issues beyond the school's walls. Consider cable television. Our inherited notions about schools and education will be broken to pieces when cable head-ends become located in institutions of learning. Not only will kids have real audiences, but they will also have real services to pro-

vide various community groups as they enter the school to do their own programming.

Video is far more than a new configuration of basic skills, a new subject to be squeezed into the school's curriculum. It is a communications medium, a cybernetic information system with potentials for re-shaping both the structure of teaching and the structure of schooling. People who use video with kids ought to consider the medium's potential to interface all segments of the learning environment - subjects, institutions, and people.

AN INDICTMENT AND A MODEL

Frameworks and diagrams are a little cold. I want to balance them with something more personal. The concern here remains that of structure. But by laying down some indictments and then by describing how I think video should be taught, I hope to express more personally how I feel about all this.

Some Personal Observations About
                    the Way Things Get Taught

Almost all of what passes for learning in our schools and universities has four basic components: the subject area, the space/schedule, the student, and the teacher. Interacting, these elements prescribe the ground of what is to be learned and they define the processes by which learning will take place.

My own experiences as teacher and student convince me that, by and large, those who teach have thought very little about the nature of learning or the implicit statements about knowledge-getting that reside within the curricula that are offered for study. The emphasis always appears to be placed on the "subject" and course content. At the same time, my own work in media constantly supports that proposition that how we learn is, in fact, what we learn.

Subject Area

Every teacher is forced to teach in a specific area. It would be impossible not to do this. Yet too often in making the necessary decisions about the subject we will teach, we carelessly adopt paradigms that were developed for other fields of knowledge and developed at a time when both the nature of knowledge and the needs of learners was different than they are today. Continuing specialization is part of the problem. The more we know of a thing, the less we teach of its whole. Inter-disciplinary approaches are rare. Thus we leave it to the bright student to perceive not only the way that our own field fits together but the manner that all fields interweave their concerns in all ways and always. I observe that in teaching media we almost invariably disconnect making things from studying things. There are some reasons for this but none of them are congruent with the nature of the field.

Schedules and Spaces

We all know that any subject area is affected by how it is packaged as well as how it is defined. But it is uncommon to find teachers or departments that challenge their own institutions' packaging of established and arbitrary schedules, length of classes, durations of courses, places for learning or the very notions bound up in departmental structures. Each of these things affects what it is we have chosen to teach about.

Students

The one-dimensional perspective by which students are viewed is similarly out-of-sync with what our own discipline makes clear. In planning courses and departmental curricula we take little account beyond lip service of the fact that there is no such thing as a typical student -- that each learner comes to us with different concerns, different experiences and, most important, different ways of learning. As people have noted before, our educational systems are based upon the model of the factory; each of us holds our position on the production line as we perform the same operation upon an endless stream of similarly perceived objects. We even insist on our own forms of quality control – grades, requirements and degrees.

Teachers

The observations one can make about the fourth component of formal schooling are no less chilling. We have chosen to define our roles as teachers in nineteenth century terms even though we claim to know something about twentieth century communications forms and our post-industrial society. Like our own grade school teachers, our students will be able to say of us, "He didn't teach video for fifteen years, he taught the same year of video fifteen times." Fortunately, elementary school teaching is beginning to change today and there is much we can learn from the movement towards "open education." We can learn as teachers, for example, to evaluate and distinguish between activity-based and lecture-based learning, between inductive and deductive learning processes, between student se-

John Hill

lected and teacher-selected curricula. If we perceive ourselves as mediums through which discovery is to take place, we ought to be able to adopt a variety of roles equal to the variety of learners and the variety of subject areas we teach. And if we were really to apply the media truism about form-is-content to our selection of colleagues, we would find our institutions maintaining the eclecticism and dynamism that is inherent in our field. The frightening movement towards certification of instructors would be exposed for the featherbedding apparatus it really is.

It is difficult to observe the medium of existing, institutionalized education without indicting it. Yet, faced with the pervasive and persuasive presence of established norms for teaching and learning, it is even more difficult to begin turning things around. But it is precisely this task that I feel the teachers of media are specially equipped to do.

An Integrated Video Studies Curriculum

As a way of discussing a re-integration of the whats and the hows of teaching, I would like to describe a model video curriculum. Putting it another way, here is how I would structure an integrated set of learning environments for video. The broad aim behind this plan is simply to open-up many ways of learning and many ways of defining subject matter.

Formal Video Studies

There should be at least one course in video. It would address the concerns and follow the developmental structure outlined in Framework I. But there would also be an introductory course aimed at "exposing" students to the fundamentals of image making and image study as coexisting within film, photography, sound and video.

In designing a specific curriculum for a formal course, care would be spent in constructing activities that cover as broad as possible a spectrum of experiential processes. Sometimes students would be forced to work together, sometimes alone. Sometimes the teacher's input would be quite central (lectures, analysis of videotapes, discussions of

Tad Danforth

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readings, etc.) In other activities, students might be required to teach each other. Sometimes they would be required to take on problems without any guidance. In all formal courses, students would be urged to reflect upon the variety of ways in which they were being asked to learn.

Such formal offerings would provide students with a highly structured and tightly focused field to learn about. The pace and content would be pretty much controlled by the teacher. Informal courses, required readings, viewings, discussions, field-trips, production projects and presentations by guests would seek to insure that kids perceive the field of video and television in its broadest sense.

Interdisciplinary Video Studies

A video teacher would carry less than the full academic load in order to work with others on the faculty in developing cross-disciplinary projects. Teaching units that involve broadcasting analysis and VTR production could be scheduled for "American History" and "Urban Studies" classes. Elsewhere in the school's curriculum, video would be incorporated within theater, dance and writing courses.

In order to insure that the interdisciplinary work have an impact upon both school and community, a special interdisciplinary course would be offered. Here small groups of kids with production competence in video would use their skills in seeking to effect specific change within the school or larger community. Although video would be extensively used within this course. The real subject matter would be determined by the students. The only requirements placed on each of the small video task forces would be that it research its problem, develop a strategy for change, produce a video-based statement, present this message to a targeted audience and evaluate the message-success in terms of goal. It would be through this "process" rather than a prescribed "content" that this course would define itself. An interdisciplinary focus would be achieved, of course, regardless of what specific "problem" students choose.

Informal and Independent Video Studies

Finally, an integrated video curriculum should lay great stress on creating opportunities (and tolerances) for "other" contexts through which to teach and learn about television.

The teacher would try to establish work-study or apprentice-type situations where individual kids would work on video related projects. Perhaps, for example, kids would spend time at a local broadcast or cable station. Or they might use skills they had developed (and the school's equipment if necessary) in providing video expertise to groups outside the school. Or some kids could teach video within nearby elementary schools.

Open workshops and free access to hardware would be available for any student who wanted to try something with videotape. The teacher's goal in such an open context would be to accommodate each individual's rate, level, purpose and style of learning - even when the teacher could foresee failure on various terms. Indeed, failures would be common. A specific concern in creating informal workshop environments would be to help students gain the confidence to experiment freely and for its own sake instead of constantly seeking a "successful" product and a teacher's sanction.

A Summary

Education is an art. It takes its form from the delicate and shifting engagement between those who are learning, those who are teaching, the environment of that learning and the subject matter through which and for which the meeting takes place. Because teaching is an art, because video is an art too, there is very, very little that can be said in a general way about any specific component of the exchange. Similarly, there is very little that can be assumed or left unstudied.

It is not the purpose of either the two frameworks or this model to provide formulas for working with video and kids. I believe there are no prescriptions to be handed down about what constitutes a good teacher, or learner, or source, or curriculum. Rather, the purpose of this article is to open-up options, to encourage diversity, to help in considering all possibilities and dangers. And to show how these are interrelated completely.

Ellie Bartow

Teaching and Reflecting

JOE PETNER and SUSAN SHERWOOD

Perusing through the literature on teacher training, (HO HUMMmmmm), one notices a great deal of material on videotaping as a tool in teacher training. There are programs all around the country bearing titles like Teacher Self Appraisal, Video in-Service Project and Microteaching - the most familiar tag.

Much of the emphasis in these projects is placed on specifying teaching competencies in an effort to determine effective teaching behaviors. The argument is that to get "good teaching," you determine what "good teachers" do and train everyone else to do it. The problem with this approach is that it is overly behavior specific. Too frequently these techniques are used as a kind of external manipulation.

As Arthur Coombs points out, "The personal character of good teaching can be documented by almost any of us from our own experience. If one thinks back to his own school days, one will probably remember that the good teachers one had in one's lifetime did not all behave alike or even with great similarity. Rather, each one stands as a person, an individual. . . Each had his own peculiar methods, values, techniques. Good teaching is like that, an intensely personal thing."

Supporting, Not Contorting

What emerges from this different perspective (i.e., good teaching is an intensely personal thing), is a challenge to use video in supporting teachers, not contorting them to fit some common norm of good teaching. Thus, we must begin to focus on ways of working with teachers that enables them - as individuals - to work through their concerns; ways that help teachers understand what is happening to children and themselves.

A Mutual Experience

During the 72-73 school year, we (Susan-teacher, Joe-resource colleague) began to explore the possibilities of using ½ inch videotape at one of the elementary schools on the Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation in North Dakota. We have come to view that experience as one of teaching and reflecting (TAR).

The notion of TAR deliberately implies two separate processes; teaching - those kinds of activities one spends doing when kids are present; and reflecting - the kind of activity one does when kids are not present.

In our own work we have assumed that a way to proceed (one way in a number of other alternatives that might be utilized), is by operating with a goal of maintaining a certain distance from the immediate press of the teaching situation. For openers we have acknowledged that in the teacher's day-to-day immersion in the life of the classroom, with its insistent and continuous demands, there is not the time nor energy to reflect on what is happening or to attempt to make some sense of it. Videotape strikes us as a valuable means for establishing and maintaining the kind of distance we feel is necessary for reflection.
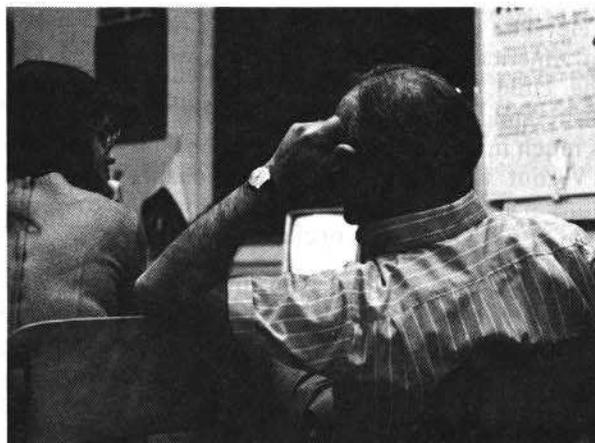
Kit Laybourne

Our main focus during the taping was kids, although the teacher was certainly present at times in this interactive process. However, the purpose for the taping was to build up our knowledge of the kids. Our assumption was that we could provision better for kids learning by watching them in their engagement with the setting; that we could use this information as base-line data for problem solving about how Susan might better meet the needs and interests of kids. Underlying this assumption was the feeling that Susan would come to see her role as teacher in terms of what she was and how she was affecting kids. In this way, we felt she would begin to understand herself in the role of teacher.

Children were taped in a variety of settings (i.e., playground, classroom, cafeteria, library). This helped provide a more balanced view of particular children.

Transcending the Media

The experience is now behind us and we certainly

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feel it was a valuable one. We have also concluded that it is a whole lot easier to write about than to do!

For others who might begin to use tape in a similar manner, we can make the following suggestions: The viewing sessions might focus on noticing the kinds of activities in which the child engages: interaction with friends; a child's mode of interaction; a child's body tension; his/her eye contact - watching for the child's point of contact; a child's energy exchange - how and when this occurs; content of conversation.

It might also be helpful to balance this by noting the kinds of materials found in the setting. A sketch of the physical space often provides other useful information.

When viewing sessions are aimed at trying to understand the dynamics of the child, the teacher immediately begins to locate a basis for working with individuals in the class. This level of dialogue also provides colleagues with an opportunity to respond to tapes through specific suggestions about how to help particular children.

Perhaps, the most striking dimension of this approach is that it provides a means for teachers to refresh the setting for themselves and their kids.

An Attempt at Video Research

MITCH ACKERMAN

Television has had a marked impact on many facets of American society. It's most susceptible viewer is the child. The nature of television viewing has made children passive consumers. To be sure, there is much involvement with the action that occurs on TV, but the child is given little chance to inject himself into the process of television, not to question or discuss what is occurring or why.

Over the past few years, media investigators and educators have been exploring means to overcome this passivity. One possibility is to allow children to make their own television productions with the use of portable VTR equipment. It is felt that through an involvement with the processes of television production, children will become more analytical and critical of this medium.

A Study

An Exploratory Study of the Observed Differences in Television Program Production Resulting From a Structured and an Unstructured Television Workshop for Elementary School Children.

This study was designed to discover differences in programs produced by structured and non-structured elementary school VTR workshops. The project was planned so that the information obtained would be general rather than specific in nature. The results of this study hopefully contribute to the systematic acquisition of information in the area of video studies and its role in our educational system.

Conducting the Workshops

The workshops were held in an elementary school in Columbia, Maryland in the winter of 1973. There were six fifth graders in each group, in matched pairs. The matching was done on the basis of sex, race, and a standardized intelligence test.

A pre-test was designed so that general background information on each subject as well as attitudes, viewing habits, and knowledge of television could be obtained. Any effect of the workshop on these factors was obtained by comparison on the same pre-test administered as a post-test.

The two workshops met once a week, for two hours, for eight weeks using a single camera system. The structured group was designed to give the students both theoretical and practical knowledge of the medium through planned lectures, discussions and productions. They were given the types of productions to do but were not told how to do them. The word structure should not connote a strictly controlled atmosphere in this case, but one that was informal and relaxed. The students were simply given more information and assistance in an organized manner than the non-structured group. The non-structured workshop was based on self-exploration and discovery of the television medium. The format of the workshop was very "loose." There were no specific productions nor lectures. The students produced their own programs with little assistance. The researcher was always available to answer and discuss any questions that evolved from their exploration, but no attempt was made to inject discussion, unless it was brought up by the children. A journal was kept for both groups by the researcher in an attempt to relate and analyze the process that was developing and to provide insight to the nature of each of the sessions.

The Research Design

Provisions were made to record the results of the workshops in as many ways as possible. An audio tape was made of each workshop session in its entirety. The pre-tests and post-tests were also recorded on audio tape. Photographs were taken at

most sessions to capture individual moments during the productions and of the children at work using the equipment. A journal was kept for each session, describing what went on that day. The journal was used to note observations as to the processes that were taking place. The videotape productions are naturally the most significant documents of this project. Although only thirty minutes of tape were shown to evaluators for judging, approximately three hours of production tapes were recorded, and are still available for study.

Finally, there is the written thesis. The thesis was devised to provide general rather than specific information. The first chapter deals with the philosophical approach to the problem and provides a bakcground of similar projects that have been done by other people. The design of the study is covered in the second chapter. It is divided into five basic sections: the selection of the subjects, the pre-test, the workshop sessions, the post-test and the evaluation of the productions. The whys and hows are given in detail. The data obtained from the tests, the journal and the evaluation sheets are then presented and analyzed. The last chapter presents conclusions and recommendations for future studies. The appendices include many helpful materials such as the pre-test and post-test questionnaires; the structured workshop curriculum; the evaluation sheet used by the judging panels; a videotape catalogue of all the productions made by the students; and the weekly journal of the workshop sessions. Copies can be obtained through the University of Maryland, Department of Speech and Dramatic Arts, College Park, Maryland.

Evaluating the Findings

The productions of the final two weeks of each workshop were evaluated for technical quality, visual attractiveness, content and message differences. Three different panels of judges were selected; parents, teachers and broadcast professionals.

The pre- and post-tests showed that most of the children greatly enjoy television and that it takes

Mary Sheridan

up much of their time. There was, however, very little change in their viewing habits over the two month period. On production related questions, both group's knowledge basically increased or remained the same.

The weekly journal provided information that could not be obtained from any other of the data. The researcher viewed the non-structured group as more "creative" and the structured group as better organized. The non-structured children were more individualistic, whereas, the structured children worked better as a group. There were no significant differences between the groups that appear related to sex, race or intelligence differences.

The data from the evaluations of the programs offer evidence that, in general, there were no obvious differences between the productions of the structured versus the non-structured workshops, although the non-structured group programs tended to be rated slightly higher by the panel. There were also very little differences in the ratings by the individual panels of judges, (except for the broadcast related judges, who rated the non-structured group's tapes slightly higher.) It also appears that although each group's programs as a whole were rated almost equally, there were various aspects of the shows in which one group did better than the other. The non-structured group seemed to be better able to keep the audience's interest level and convey their message, while the structured group seemed to be more adept at most of the camera skills. Neither group showed any differences in use of visuals or in acting. The individual panels varied in their ratings of the various elements of the programs, but once again the broadcast related judges were most similar in their ratings to all three groups totalled.

Conclusion

In this writer's opinion, what this study has shown is that the ideal television workshop is one that is based upon the principles of both a structured and non-structured format. Children need some structured impetus. In order for quality to be present in a program, children need some authoritative advice when they are doing things wrong or poorly. Teaching them to be analytical and critical appears to aid them in both producing their own programs and watching others. But for a more interesting and better presented show, it is advised not to force children into doing suggested genres of television. Let them freely decide what they want to do. This combination of structured and non-structured, is sure to produce the best results possible in their final products.

Why Research

There are some real good reasons for education to conduct rigorous research about what kids learn with video instead of merely evaluating their work by "gut" reaction.

Experimental research becomes important in times

when money and funds for educational projects is scarce. To be able to give school administrations or foundation people a very specific outline of experimental procedures and hypotheses can have tremendous influence. The presence of a research model was one of the factors that led the Imagination Foundation and Antioch College/Columbia, Maryland to support this project with equipment even though I had no previous relationship with them.

Much investigation still needs to be done concerning children's television workshops. Future researchers should take larger samples over longer periods of time with more adequate budgets and facilities. There is a need to incorporate a measurement for visual literacy and to relate that measurement to workshop conditions and program production. A redesign of the evaluation instruments will be necessary in future studies.

It is imperative that children today be exposed to some type of television workshop. It is hoped that this report will be of help to those dedicated people who can "see the light" now.

Action for Children's Television

MAGGI COWLAN

Who is out there talking to our children? There's one rather simple answer to this question – TELEVISION. ACTION FOR CHILDREN'S TE—LEVISION, however, is talking for children who are being talked to and at. ACT is a Boston-based support group for parents, teachers and professionals concerned with television programming and how to change it. The group has been responsible for drastic changes in children's programming.

ACT has: influenced broadcasters to appoint vice-presidents in charge of children's programming; encouraged the National Association of Broadcasters to reduce the commercial time in children's programming from 16 minutes an hour to 12 minutes (adult programming is 8-10 minutes an hour); been instrumental in eliminating children's vitamin advertising through law suits leveled against three major drug comapnies and the Federal Trade Commission; held symposiums with the American Academy of Pediatricians and the Yale University Child Study Department, among others; encouraged the diversity of children's television on Saturday mornings; alerted parents to the problems and the potential of children's television and collected their feelings and their hopes for action.

Originally, ACT was a core group of four women concerned about the television their own children were watching. They watched children's television, met with local station executives and read as much as possible about children and television. Their initial meetings in 1968 were concerned primarily with the prevalence of violence on television. The group came to realize that violence existed on television because it sold products and that as long as broadcasters believed such programming was the easiest way to get large audiences, the highest ratings, the most advertising dollars, they would continue their present scheduling. ACT saw clearly that the entire financial structure of television, especially with regard to children's programming, would have to be changed. Broadcasters could not

be allowed to justify using the same criteria for planning children's programming as for adult television. Television, for children, must become a public service arena designed to be responsible to the needs of the child rather than the pressures of advertisers.

Right now, over 100,000 other parents, teachers and professionals have joined ACT's demands for better children's programming. Organizations which sponsor ACT read like a Who's Who of concerned educators and professionals. They include: The American Academy of Pediatrics, The American Friends Service Committee, The American Group Psychotherapy Association, The Association of Childhood Education International, The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, The National Conference of Christians and Jers and The National Health Council. For financial support, ACT relies on $5.00 membership dues as well as administrative funding from the John and Mary Markle Foundation in New York and program support from the
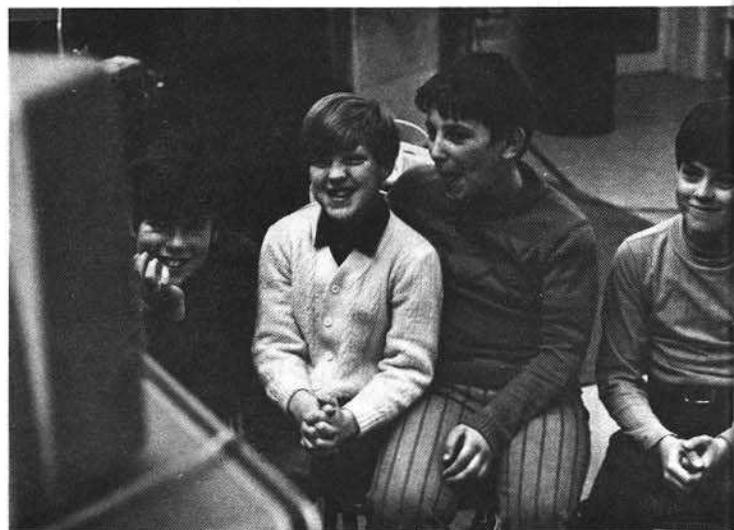
Kit Laybourne

Ford Foundation.

To those in power, ACT is saying - clearly and loudly - that new guidelines for children's programming must be adopted in which different kinds of programs are designed to meet the developmental needs of children at different age levels. Further, ACT is advocating that: there shall be no sponsorship and no commercials on children's programs; no performers shall be permitted to use or mention products, services or stores by brand name during children's program; every station shall provide daily programming for children; and there shall be no less than 14 hours of such programming per week, as part of its public service requirement.

These guidelines acknowledge that what children watch is a JOINT responsibility of both parents and broadcasters. Broadcasters retain total freedom to make their own decisions about the content of children's programs. Manufacturers of toys, cereals and candy would be permitted to advertise on programs directed to parents. The assumption behind ACT's guidelines is that children just do not have the experience or judgment to contend with commercials and they should not be used to pressure their parents into buying.

ACT is concerned with the implementation of these guidelines on local and national levels. By first raising the consciousness of parents, teachers and kids, and then by following through with legal action to change the regulating structures, ACT is

making quite an impact.

In order to help others who share their concerns, ACT has prepared a number of first-rate publications. Their Nutrition Kit, aimed at kids and adults, points out some alternatives to sweets. A Resource List is also available which includes general information on cable, television, and children and television. These publications, and others, provide resources and an initial step for others who want to join the action.

On a different level, ACT has petitioned the Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Trade Commission and CBS. They have picketed WHDH in Boston to restore the "Captain Kangaroo Show." They have sponsored and participated in numerous conferences and symposiums. ACT has commissioned some of the most important studies on children and television to date. These studies show the entire gamut of children's television concerns, and they are providing the academic support for ACT to continue its work. (Others are supporting ACT on a purely common-sense level. The Parade Magazine 1972 study released the fact that more people are concerned about what their kids watch and more concerned about how to change it than was thought possible.)

ACT is providing a means for those who are interested in changing the entire structure of children's programming to do so and is well on its way to making television for children the public service arena most of us want.

Invitation to a Video Forum

ANNE PAGE

Videotapes made by kids for kids are not being shared. Much valuable interchange is being lost because such tapes have the possibility of stimulating dialogue/discussion between groups in various parts of the country. I have recently been involved with this kind of video-pal exchange between high school video classes. The results have been so rewarding that it has occurred to me that the principle of sharing tapes could be expanded. I'm willing to make this happen.

From my perspective, the value of this activity lies in the area of awareness and knowledge which can be gained from the experience of sharing feelings, topics of concern and ideas within a group of people from all over the country. (Why not the world?) The processes involved when each group creates their own messages are equally important. The act of sharing of a group forum becomes a real experience towards extending individual efforts into a

collective consciousness. It is also an act, of course, in expanding and exploring new communications possibilities.

An Example

A class of Philadelphia high school kids makes a tape on "Housing in Your City/Town." (Or even more specific topics such as "Tenants Equal Rights, What is Being Done in Your Area?") Concurrently, classes in Chicago, Illinois; Flagstaff, Arizona; Bartlesville, Oklahoma; Boston, Massachusetts; Palm Beach, Florida and Little Rock, Arkansas or whereever, also prepare tapes of their housing environments. Then the fun begins when these are sent to each participating group. Beside the advantage of receiving information on a particular topic from different areas and viewpoints, this video forum concept can stimulate kids to create new networks of video exchange. A fall out of the process will be discussions about "What is mass communication?"

and "How can individuals create an alternative information and message system which is responsive to their needs?" Because there are no models for this idea, the kids who become involved will be creating a new communication network relationship.

You Are Cordially Invited. . . .

In order to begin the Video Forum needs:

A. Interested kids/classes/groups/individuals.

B. A central coordinating spot.

C. Common topics, interests, concerns, to be expressed on video.

D. Cooperation.

I will volunteer to item B. If you're interested, items A and D will take care of themselves. Here is a procedure for taking care of item C and, in general, getting things organized.

1. Send a letter to Video Forum as soon as possible including: name, school or group; address and telephone number; grade or ages of kids and indication of date your program begins and ends; topics of interest - be as specific as you can. List in order of preference if it matters.

2. I will group participants according to similar topics and ages/grades. (Express whether you want a limited age/grade range. it might be fun to leave it open and experience some cross-age teaching.)

3. You will receive a final list of participants in your topic/group. A mailing list for your video tape will also be included.

4. An arbitrary preparation time of one month seems reasonable. So if you finish making your tape before that time just start it going according to the tape's mailing list.

5. To insure that the process be a real flow of information/communication and to also insure that each participant receives tape before the end of the semester, you should quickly send each tape you get along to the next name on the list. Let's say two days or so in each school. (I will also list for each participant the order they shall receive the tapes and from whom. So if there is a long delay that person/school can be contacted.)

6. Now assuming everyone is tuned-in!, there should be some nice dialogue, reactions and discoveries going in all sorts of directions. For our own evaluation and learning, I would like some response from each participating school, including the following information: Likes and dislikes of the process; suggestions for improvements; projects which resulted from this forum; reactions to specific tapes. If you can, please send along any visual printed material and additional tapes that were shared. This also includes response tapes if you wish to share them with me or the forum. All originals will be returned.

Send all correspondence to:

Video Forum
Anne Page - Communications Experience
23rd and Federal Streets
Philadelphia, Pa. 19146

(215) 336-7788

Jon Dunn
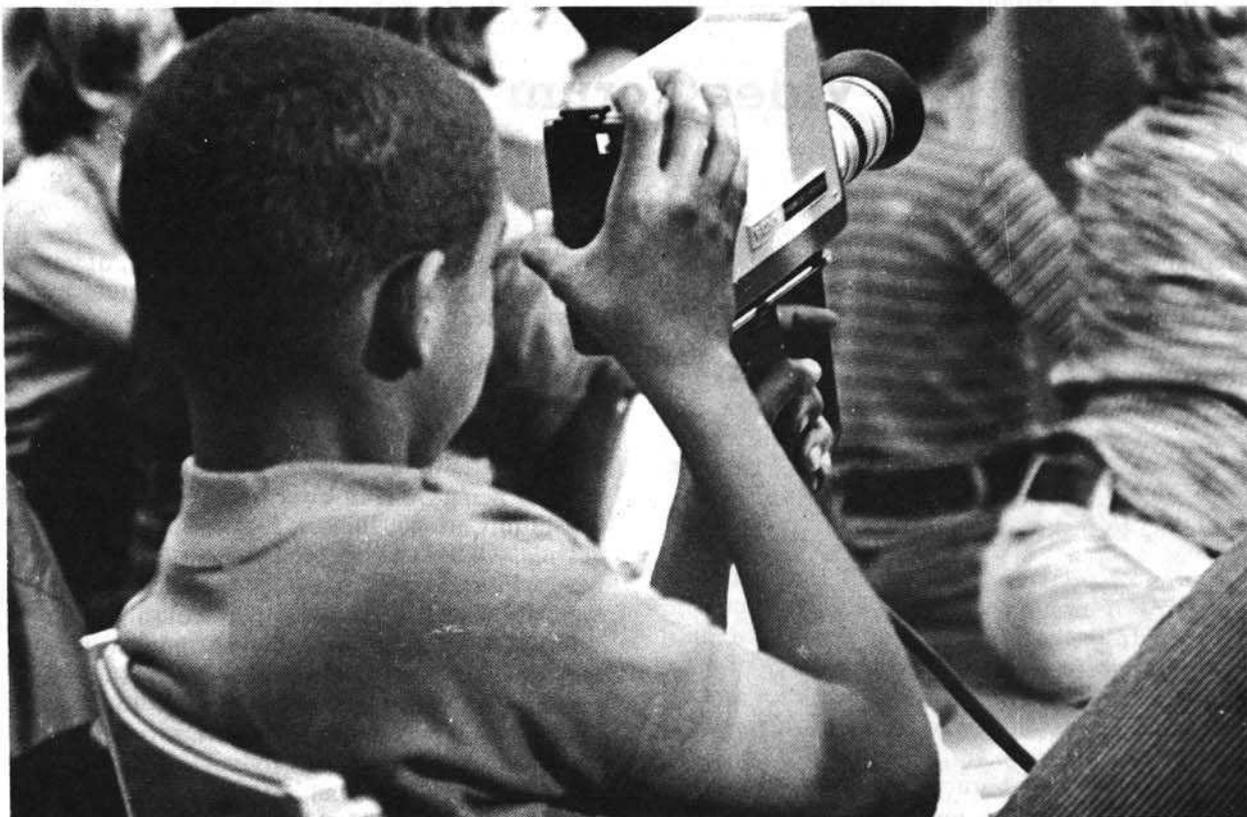
Things To Do With Kids

A Portfolio of Activities

For those who like participation games, there is a short quiz. It tries to pin you down. You are asked to assess your position upon various continuums. The seven questions match seven areas of contention that shape the Things To Do in this section.

QUIZ

1. My emphasis in teaching would be towards helping kids gain critical and creative skills for their use in understanding the impact of broadcast television in their lives.

agree   1   2   3   4   5   disagree

2. I would not find it useful to follow some-one else's video studies curriculum regardless of how good I thought it was.

agree   1   2   3   4   5   disagree

3. Even if I believed that the development of specific, measurable "behavioral objectives" was inappropriate for use in teaching video, I would fashion such statements if school administration required them.

agree   1   2   3   4   5   disagree

4. In introducing kids to portapaks, I would simply set the unassembled equipment on a table and then leave the room for awhile after asking a small group of kids to try to figure out how to assemble the equipment and then proceed to record and playback and tape.

agree   1   2   3   4   5   disagree

5. When you really come down to it, any assignment for, say, street-shooting achieves pretty much the same things as any other street-shooting activity.

agree   1   2   3   4   5   disagree

6. It is not important for kids to make tapes which are finely finished and suitable for large public showings.

agree   1   2   3   4   5   disagree

7. The only successful way to have kids learn about video is to have them do video productions.

agree   1   2   3   4   5   disagree

Something happens in a room full of teachers when the talk turns to activities. It clears the air. There is an expectation of usefulness. A "here's-what-I've-done-that-works" perspective seems to cut away the puffery of rhetoric, theory, goals, rationale, acceptance strategies and specific objectives. Discussing what to do with kids avoids tendencies for self-depreciation or boastfulness. It resolves as a given everyone's Best Attentions.

In this section you will get an opportunity to read between the lines of what others are doing with video. We hope you took the quiz. Now we'd like to ask you to measure your answers against the conflicting arguments of others. Towards this end, we are supplying a primer to some of the "heavy contentions" that you can ferret out of the activities that follow. But you'll have to look carefully - the sides people have chosen on these important issues are inexplicit.

TV vs. VT

For some teachers, working with video tools is aimed at helping kids develop an understanding and respect for the broadcast formats of conventional television. "Know your enemy," they say. "De-mystify television by doing television." We must help kids develop skills that will help them deal with their video environment." (Agreement with question 1.)

Others are primarily concerned that kids come to know the unique qualities of video as opposed to television. They hold that because the equipment is simple, inexpensive, and portable there is a clear difference between small format and studio format mediums. They say things like this: "By learning what video is you learn what television isn't." "Video has to do with Self and you'd better have kids know something about themselves before they start laying numbers on others." Or even, "VT is TV inside out." (Disagreement with question 1.)

Prescription vs. Description

This has become a classic dilemma. The issue is one of heuristics and it shows up in the way one constructs activity for the use of others.

On one side it is argued that some people may understand more about teaching video than others, that they may have had greater experience and, consequently, they have figured out the better ways to do things with kids. Further, (goes the "prescriptive" argument), there is a quality of legitimacy within cannonized curricula that helps get video studies accepted in many schools. Overworked and undertrained teachers need packaged materials. Finally, to the extent that they are "teacher-proof", prescriptions of what to do help the greatest number of kids. (Disagreement with question 2.)

Here are some arguments against prescription. The climate and success of the classroom is critically effected by the degree that a teacher participates in planning the curriculum. If you work with someone else's activities you may be trying on a style of teaching with which you have no congeniality. And just who is to say what is best or what should be left out? Because every classroom is different it is quite impossible to come even close to predicting what will work. Those who try to be descriptive point out how few years half-inch video systems have been around and that there are no real "video experts." (Agreement with question 2.)

Adoption vs. Mutation

This bout is related to the preceding one. We have watched people get very exercised in what amounts to a political question – in getting video into the schools (Doing Good), how far can you go in meeting existing instructional goals and in accommodating administrative expectations before you debase the medium of what makes it worth teaching in the first place (Doing Bad)?

Judge yourself whether the activities that follow compromise the real strengths of video. (Also whether agreement/disagreement with question 3 represents a mutation of video or a practical adoption of it to schools.)

Inductive Bias vs. Deductive Bias

Here is a question of teaching style. Throughout the activities (and, of course, in other sections of this journal as well) you will find a pedagogical polarity. It is the old tension between structure and non-structure, between student-centered and teacher-centered priorities, between lectures and projects, between grades and no grades, between individual and group curricula, between short and long term "units."

We urge you to pay special attention in searching out assumptions among these conflicting positions as you study the Things To Do that follow. (Agreement with question 4 suggests a preference for the "inductive" process, disagreement for the "deductive" process.)

How to Teach vs. What to Teach

Some people think you can separate these two. Some don't. (If you disagreed in question 5, you are in the second group.)

Process vs. Product

How important is it that kids make good tapes?

For some, achieving a good product is the only legitimate and workable goal when kids make video. This position in yet another classic argument contends that the only way to learn how to communicate with video is by rigorously seeking to fashion an effective, artful message. "Product" becomes the central index and the primary feedback mechanism in the process of learning video. (Disagreement with question 6.)

Sharp disagreement on the other side. The compulsive, competitive focus on the end product corrupts the means to that end. Or: the only justification for bringing video into a classroom is that it will help kids learn. That is, we are teaching kids not teaching video. Some "process" people believe that the very nature of the medium itself is a cybernetic one -- a process of information feedback where there can be, by definition, no final end point or product. (Agreement with question 6.)

Making vs. Studying

There is much of this schism too. Some people choose only to teach production. (Agreement with question 7.) Others develop courses that are "study" oriented – they have readings and screenings and field-trips and discussions but never involve making video. (Disagreement with question 7.) Some people we know teach both production and criticism yet feel that, in practice, these two approaches don't work well with each other. Still others feel that making video and studying it can only work together.

We're going to fess up to our Editors' Anxiety.

We are unhappy with a choice we made at some point in the development of this issue of Radical Software. Maybe it was a tone we set. We can't re-member. In any event, we feel it is unfortunate that the activities we solicited, collected and ourselves described deal exclusively with production-oriented activities. There are many nifty things to do that make kids smarter about video and television yet don't require a single piece of hardware.

In keeping with our general wish to present as many options as possible, we feel bad about the omission - justifications of only 64 pages notwithstanding. To counter our anxiety we have put special emphasis in the RESOURCES section on materials that provide non-production activities you ought to consider trying with your kids.

BEWARE these dualities.

Studying opposites is a good heuristic device. Yet, although it is helpful to consider clear-cut choices, we suggest that you reject adopting them. We do.

Introductory Video Exercises

QUINCY BENT

The following activity is designed to provide a series of structured experiences for exploring some of the fundamental techniques of video and TV production. Used as an introduction to some basic visual concepts, these exercises may provide children with a helpful framework for planning and producing their own video material.

The Activity

The exercises break down into seven main components: the first five are designed for the single camera VTR system, and the last two for a multi-camera, studio system.

For all exercises it is essential that a monitor or TV set be placed so that all participants can see themselves as they perform the various activities. If you are using a portapak system, hook up an RF converter to send the picture directly to the monitor or TV set.

The exercises should be done in sequence. Each child does not have to do every exercise. Generally it is easier to rotate turns so that each child becomes a "subject," then a camera operator, then a switcher (when working in a studio system.) If you

John Le Baron

have a large number of children - 20 to 40 - it is suggested that you use more than one subject for each exercise. Make sure that each child gets a turn with the equipment - especially the camera.

While exercises may seem complex when they are described in written form, you will find that they take a very short time to complete - even with a large class. A group of fifteen to twenty children can usually complete all the exercises in about thirty minutes.

Good luck!

EXERCISE ONE: Far and Near

This first series of exercises deals with the most basic properties of every visual medium. What happens to our visual concept of size and number when they are defined by a small, flat, one dimensional surface? This problem is incredibly difficult to verbalize, but with immediate feedback from a video monitor, it is easy to experiment with.

A. Static Camera/Active Subject

Set the camera at a wide angle focal length and place it on a table or tripod. It is important that

the camera not be moved for this section.

1) Ask a child to fill the screen with his face. (He should move towards the camera.)

2) Ask the same child to fit his whole body into the screen. (He should move away from the camera.)

3) Ask a second child, then a third, then a fourth etc., to try and fit their whole bodies into the same picture. (How many whole bodies can fit into the picture? If the room was longer would more fit in? If the room was shorter what would happen?)

B. Active Camera/Static Subject

Section A exercises are duplicated, but this time the camera moves and subject(s) remain still.

1) Ask a child to use the camera to fill the screen with a subject's face. (He may zoom-in or physically move the camera towards the subject.)

2) Ask a child to use the camera to fit a subject's whole body into the screen.

3) How many whole bodies can be fit into the screen?

Teaching Suggestions

You may find it more convenient to merge these two sections together into one so that the static camera is immediately followed by its active camera counterpart. However, a child who gets his first turn to work the camera is not going to want to hold it absolutely still without some very strong persuasion on your part. Try and choose a kid who will not be too embarassed to fill the screen with his face. Since the whole class is sharing in this experience it will be a cause of some amusement.

Variations and Follow-Up

Use far and near exercises to judge aesthetic qualities of objects; experiment with different dramatic gestures to determine which ones are effective as close-ups (a clenched fist) and which are effective as medium or long shots (a kicking-screaming temper tantrum); check to see whether there is any difference in the picture between zooming in on a subject and physically moving the camera closer to a subject.

EXERCISE TWO: Image Manipulation

One of the crucial differences between interesting video and boring video is the control that participants have over the images. Whether kids are working in a dramatic, documentary or narrative mode, the camera operators, tape editors and subjects should be able to exert maximum influence on the content. The following series may help in encouraging a greater awareness of how to manipulate images.

"Imagine that the TV screen is a kind of room which has a floor (point to the bottom of the screen), a ceiling (the top of the screen) and two walls (sides)."

A. Static Camera/Active Subject

1) Ask one or more children to walk into the

pretend room (into the camera picture) and pretend to touch the screen floor. They might also pretend to lean their elbows on the screen floor.

2) Ask one or more children to touch the screen ceiling. They may have to jump up.

3) "Can you touch the left screen wall?" This is quite difficult because the monitor image is the opposite from a mirror.

4) "Can you touch the right screen wall?" Don't let them 'poke a hole' in the pretend wall.

B. Active Camera/Static Subject

1) Ask a camera operator to put a subject's head on the screen floor.

2) Bowling Balls - ask the camera operator to move head(s) on the floor from left to right across the screen.

3) Feet on the ceiling - camera operator places subject's feet on the screen ceiling.

4) Ouch! - camera operator moves subjects from left to right across screen and bumps them into the pretend wall.

Teaching Suggestions

These exercises are designed to help children define themselves as video images or as video image manipulators. (Subjects can move; subjects can be moved.) It is important that all children have the opportunity to be subjects and try to move themselves around on the screen. Some of these exercises are difficult for young children to perform so you may wish to scale them down accordingly.

Variations and Follow-Up

Use image manipulation as a means of 'blocking-out' dramatic scenes, video dance arrangements; use camera manipulation as a means of exploring how a subject's image may be distorted or mistreated; use objects instead of people.

EXERCISE THREE: The Camera vs. the Subject

Both the camera and the subject(s) are quite active in this series of activities. As well as providing some target practice for camera operators, they are useful for illustrating how difficult it is to excape from the prying eye of the camera.

1) Hide and Seek - a child must try to escape from the camera; he may not hide behind any object in the room but instead must rely on fast-work, ducking, etc. It is amazing how hard it is to escape under these circumstances. Big Brother clearly has the edge.

2) Hide and Seek - this time the camera must try to prevent the subject from getting his picture on the screen. Be careful that camera operators don't get too excited.

Teaching Suggestions

This series can be quite wild. It's a lot of fun and may be worth the extra effort of trying to keep the noise down to a tolerable level. Proper treatment and respect for video equipment is an essential idea that children must learn; this series is a good test of

that respect. It's better to point out mistreatment under these conditions rather than later when children may not be under the same type of supervision.

Variations and Follow-Up

These exercises can become counter-productive. The emphasis for video should be cooperative rather than an adversary one. It may be helpful to get this process out of the system once and not encourage it again.

EXERCISE FOUR: Camera and Subjects Cooperate

This series attempts to demonstrate what good video is all about. When camera, audio, lights and subject(s) are all working together each controlling their separate inputs towards a common objective. Some beautiful things begin to happen.

1) Clapping and Zooming - one or more children stand in front of the camera and clap slowly in rhythm. As the hands come together the camera zooms or physically moves in; as the hands part, the camera zooms or moves out. As the children become better at this exercise they may wish to make it more elaborate - i.e., snap fingers, pick up the tempo, etc.

2) The Earthquake - a group of children walk, sit and stand around acting as if they were going about their everyday business. Suddenly the camera starts shaking and tilting (not too violently.) Someone makes a thunderous noise into the mike. Children scream, fall down, die dramatically.

3) The Monster Museum - Three children visit a monster museum. The monsters are frozen into horrible poses with hideous expressions on their faces. The three visitors wander among the monsters stopping to look at each one. They touch each monster and remark on how real this one's hair looks, how ugly that one is, etc. Finally when they come to the last monster and are ready to leave, the monsters slowly come alive. The visitors are surrounded and finally buried under these snarling, horrible creatures. Make sure that you yell "cut!" as soon as the visitors are properly disposed of.

Teaching Suggestions

These exercises are particularly useful in enabling everyone in the class to have a starring role. Encourage each child to work out his activity with the camera before you begin this exercise. Once again: these exercises are potentially wild so work hard to keep unnecessary noise to a minimum.

Variations and Follow-Up

With the class, invent other scenes, illusions, tricks, etc. Use the exercises as a basis for future scene devices.

EXERCISE FIVE: Live Edits

This is the final single camera exercise. It demonstrates how varied camera shots taken over at different times can be juxtaposed to create the illusion that an event occurred in one time period. If you do not have an edit button on your VTR, you can use the record button. The quality of the edits will not be terrific in either case, but kids will get the idea.

1) Two children are walking down the street on their way home from school. The camera watches them as they happily discuss the day's events. (10-15 seconds)

2) Some robbers crouch behind a trash can(s) waiting for victims. They are anxious and whisper among themselves. (10-25 seconds)

3) The two victims look towards the camera, scream and attempt to run away. (5 seconds)

4) The robbers advance towards the camera looking nasty. (6 seconds)

5) A scuffle involving both group ensues. First the robbers have the upper hand, but the victims finally beat up all the robbers. (20 seconds)

6) The camera watches the two children walk away from the camera heading towards home. In the foreground are the unconscious bodies of the robbers. The camera fades out (by turning the aperture slowly.)

Teaching Suggestions

Some teachers may not approve of the violence in this particular episode. If so, they may wish to design a similar scene of a less violent nature.

To make the edits as tight as possible, rewind the tape approximately 5 seconds beyond your starting point for each shot. Let the end of the previous shot play for the children so that they may see when they are to begin the next shot. Push the edit button firmly down when you are ready. If you have no edit button, use the counter to determine exactly where you wish to begin recording. The picture may be unstable for a second between shots, but there is very little you can do about it.

Variations and Follow-Up

If you don't have access to a second editing deck, this method is currently the best and easiest available. Don't let technical limitations bother you too much. Children should understand that they are not competing with broadcast TV. Make up shooting scripts for other scenes.

EXERCISE SIX: Switching

This is the first series of exercises for a multi-camera studio system. Switching from one camera to another enables the production to present a greater range of visual information in a shorter period of production time. The exercises are also useful for demonstrating to children the basic techniques used for most of their favorite TV programs.

1) The Fight - a child stands in front of each camera. A monitor is placed so that both children can see which camera has been switched onto line. The switcher punches up camera 1. The child facing camera 1 pretends to punch the camera. The switcher

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punches up camera 2. The child in front of camera 2 pretends that he has been hit in the jaw; he staggers back and then pretends to punch camera 2. This can go on as long as you can stand it. Playback the tape as soon as each group has finished. The final product will appear remarkably realistic.

2) Far and Near - a child sits in a chair and faces a line monitor. Camera 1 is positioned close to the subject; camera 2 is farther back for long and medium shots. The switcher alternates between cameras. The subject changes his expression or pose according to the shot on live, i.e., if it is camera 1 (close-up) he might stick out his tongue; if it is camera 2 he might make a gesture with his arms and legs.

Teaching Suggestions

These exercises are helpful in developing coordination between subjects, camera operators and switchers. Make certain that each person knows what he is to do before you begin.

Variations and Follow-Up

Watch a TV program and count the number of times the picture is switched. Contrast a switched program your children have made with one that uses only a single camera. When preparing scripts include rough ideas about when cameras should be switched during scenes.

EXERCISE SEVEN: Special Effects

Special effects should be used sparingly for most work by children because it is important that the technology not be directing the content. Too much reliance on fades, wipes, keys, etc., can prevent children from dealing with the central problem of how to communicate information to others. However, there are times when special effects can be useful. A fade instead of a switch can indicate the end of a sequence and the beginning of another; a "super" can be a useful tool for creating a fantasy scene. The following exercises will demonstrate how some of these effects can be used.

1) Split screen - a child in front of camera 1. A child in front of camera 2. Split the screen vertically so that each child occupies one half of the picture. Have them attempt to pretend to shake hands.

2) Split screen - same as above but split the screen horizontally. Have one child attempt to pretend to stand on the other's head.

3) The moving split screen - a child in front of camera 1; camera 2 focused on a dark piece of paper, rug, etc. Start with camera 2 and slowly move wipe 1 across the screen from left to right so that the child can pretend to push camera 2 picture off the screen.

4) Super dance - put both faders on so that the two camera pictures are superimposed. Have children dance, jump up and down, etc. In order to accentuate the action, have camera 1 tilt up and down over subjects, while camera 2 pans back and forth over subjects.

Teaching Suggestions

These exercises require some difficult moves by all participants. Allow children time to make mistakes - often these lead you off into exciting new directions. These exercises can be done by preschool children if they have the time to practice.

Variations and Follow-Up

By mixing close-up shots and long shots into the same super you can make interesting effects such as a giant hand chasing a little person. Discuss with class where special effects might get in the way of the content.

Portraits

KIT LAYBOURNE

Richard Chin

This activity seems particularly good for introducing kids to the equipment. It insures that everyone is both creator and subject of a tape. There is a special focus on inductive learning of disciplined camera control and on learning audio-editing. The product is invariably good, which means that kids will get a positive feedback and raise their frustration thresholds for more difficult projects.
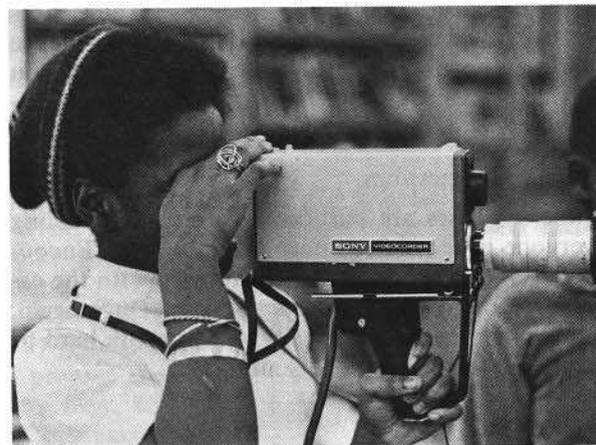
The Activity

The class divides into pairs. Using a reel-to-reel audio tape recorder, the pairs interview each other for about three minutes. With sound splicing blocks and audio-splicing tape, each student edits the interview he conducted with his partner down to sixty seconds. By listening to the edited audiotapes, the pairs decide what sequence of between five and ten "shots" would be the best visual materials for the soundtrack. A fairly tight plan is developed. Storyboards or shooting-scripts can be used here. Finally, the tape is shot, in finished seuqnece, to the exact length of the· audio tape. Titles can be added to the head or tail of the tape. Using patch cords, the audio-materials is audio-dubbed onto the tape. Presentations and evaluations with the whole class follows.

Teaching Suggestions

This activity calls upon a tight ration of equipment per student and hence might be carried out over a long period of time. Suggest arranging pairs so that kids work with someone they don't know too well. Younger kids may have trouble editing the sound – so you might have them pre-plan questions, turn off the recorder during questions and delivery, have the interviewer write a script for the interviewee after discussions (and vice-a-versa) or structure combinations of these. Using a tripod will "break" the natural rush to shoot tape and make kids plan more carefully. Disallowing any camera-movement during the shooting will "break" things further. Have kids to three or four takes of the 60 second sequence and choose the best one.

Variations and Follow-Up

Exchange a series of portraits with kids in another area; do portraits of family members; have kids do video first and audio second; discuss how close interviews come to "real" life; have kids reflect on demands placed on them both as videomakers and as subjects of the videotape; audio-dub with a mike (not patch cord) and add music from a record; try putting one person's soundtrack on another's visual portrait.

Theater Gaming

GERRY LAYBOURNE

Theater Games, originated by Viola Spolin, provide a non-threatening way for people to begin acting in front of the camera. Each game is organized around a Point of Concentration (POC) which helps to break acting into familiar, simple segments. Immediately, the participant is given something to do. Another Spolin term used in the descriptions below, Side Coaching, is the leader's methods for keeping the group focused on the POC. The first four games come from Spolin's Improvisations for the Theater, the last four from workshop experience.

The Activity

This activity requires a large, open, unobstructed space. Have the equipment assembled. Give one group member basic operating instructions. Ask others to relieve the camera man as the spirit moves them, but to try to do some taping. Each new camera man is given instructions from the previous one. It is important, especially with small children,

Milo Dalbey

to stop taping after several activities and play back the tape. This seems to reduce anxieties about seeing oneself and helps to get people involved more in acting.

1) Body Monitoring Pretest: Let your group sit for several minutes with no instructions, then have them stand and place themselves in space. POC: self feeling self. Side Coaching: concentrate on how your body feels. How do your shoulders feel? If they feel heavy, make them heavier. If they feel light, make them lighter. Think about your calves. your stomach. .your arms. .etc.

2) Play Ball: Participants should arrange themselves in a circle. Have the group decide the size of the ball they will use to play ball. POC: weight, size, speed of ball. Side Coaching: The ball is very heavy. Now make the ball very light. The ball is the same weight that it was in the beginning. The ball is very fast. Now it is very slow.

3) Tug-of-War: If you are working with young

children, you will have to spend some time discussing what a tug of war entails before you divide into teams. Although they will know what one is, it is not part of their everyday vocabulary of images. Count off by twos and divide into two teams. POC: the texture and tension of the rope. Side Coaching: Feel the rope. Feel its texture. TUG! Feel the rope burn your hands.

4) Mirrors: Have each person locate a partner. A faces B. A acts as the mirror while B initiates action. You may suggest simple activities like brushing hair or dressing. After several minutes have them switch roles. As the activity progresses, have them switch more frequently so that by the end it is difficult to know which is the mirror.. POC: mirroring the initiator's movement. Side Coaching: Follow the movements exactly. Try to move slowly and smoothly. Keep your actions exact. Be a mirror.

5) Dictionary of Feelings: Have the group position itself in space. Ask everyone to close his eyes. Begin by asking them to imagine that they are trees, then get more specific. . .a tree on a cold, windy winter day. . .a young tree on a bright spring morning. . .a tree about to be chopped down. . .an old, craggy tree. After they warm up, tell the group a story, appropriate to them, involving emotions. For example: You are on your way to school on Monday morning and you drop your spelling book in a puddle. When you arrive at school and tell your teacher, she tells you not to worry. Then you discover that your best friend has just returned after being absent for two weeks...etc. POC: acting out feelings. Side Coaching: Show me how you would feel. Concentrate on what you are feeling. How would your face look? How would your body look?

6) Long Distance Touching: Group stands in a circle. Each member touches his oppostie. Ask them to take one step backward, then another and another until they are at opposite ends of the room. POC: focus between paired members. Side Coaching: Concentrate on your opposite. Try to maintain contact. Stretch. Feel the bond between you.

7) The MTA: Have the group line up in triple file. They should push together as tightly as possible, on all sides. Have them close their eyes and slowly and carefully lead them around the room. POC: contact and group motion. Side Coaching: Keep pressed together. Feel the motion. Listen to the motion.

8) Making a Machine: Explain that the group will make a machine together. You may want to have the group decide before hand what kind of machine they will make or you may want to build an abstract machine. Have one person begin the motion and have others join in when they want to. The machine should have sound as well as motion. POC: machine rhythm. Side Coaching: The machine is getting louder. The machine is getting faster. Now it is slowing down. It is breaking down.

Teaching Suggestions

With modifications, Theater Games are appropriate for any kind of group. I used these activities with my class of high school seniors who in turn used them with children they were teaching in nursery, elementary and junior high school. In all age groups the games seemed to ease the problem of not knowing what to do or say in front of the camera. During the playback sessions we found it better to let the audience enjoy themselves rather than correcting acting styles. We were more concerned that their first experience with video be positive rather than instructive.

Music, Movement and Video

PETER HARATONIK

This activity is designed to integrate the understanding of music and its relation to movement through the use of video. Too often kids are taught music or dance through the "appreciation" approach where they are exposed to the art through

Mary Sheridan

example, a symphony by Beethoven, a ballet with Nureyev, a performance by the New York Philharmonic. What is often neglected is a way of providing understanding of the art in general; why do people create music, what do movements in dance

mean? The understanding of the process is equally as important as understanding the product.

The Activity

Groups of students (6 to 12 at most) working with a facilitator (teacher) first do non-verbal theater games. Activities which explore feelings, emotions, and impressions, are best, i.e., children are asked to show with facial expressions their concept of "happy," "sad," "hungry," "sleepy," "angry," etc. These are taped and played back. Usually kids will exaggerate those concepts (a big frown for "sad" or a licking of the lips for "hungry.") During play back emphasize the idea of exaggeration. Have everyone use their entire bodies to show how they feel. Have the kids move around portraying those different feelings. The same process can be done for animals, plants or machines. What is it like to be a fish, or a rose, or a TV.

These activities are taped. When played back, suggest to the group that sounds be added to the movements. This can be done in a variety of ways. While doing "emotions," selections of classical music of different styles can be played. For the concept of happy, for example, play various examples of concert music and ask the group which they feel "happiest" about. (You can also extend that to talking about why they think the composer wrote the music the way he did.) Students can create their own "happy sounds" using percussion instruments of just their voices. The sounds can be "orchestrated" by the group to go with various movements or emotions. A final tape is then created integrating the movements with the sounds either recorded or generated. When played back all sorts of questions can be discussed: Does this really represent the idea we were trying to express?; How do we recognize how people feel without the use of words?; What other languages besides speech do we use to communicate?; What elements in music give us clues to the composer's intentions?; How does body movement indicate the way you feel inside?; What does it mean "to dance?"; What does it mean "to make music?"; When is music or dance "popular" or "classical?"

Variations and Follow-Up

Concentrate (especially with older kids) on integrating the process with other activities. A highly integrative activity might be to use a piece such as the 1812 Overture and explore the full implications of that work. Creating movements to go with the music, creating stories to act out to the music, investigating what the music was intended to express, researching the original event that sparked the writing of the piece, etc. The portapak role here is to serve as a mechanism for feedback and reflection.

Teaching Suggestions

The activity can be used best in the elementary school particularly with kids in the middle age group (6 to 10 years old.) Size and continuity are important. You need a small enough group so that students will feel comfortable yet large enough to enable interaction. And most important, develop activities which you are comfortable in carrying out. Never begin a project in which you have feelings of doubt or anxiety.

6:00 News

BRUCE COST

This activity is especially suited to courses in which mass media are studied. It gives students a conception of how TV and newspapers handle the same information. By doing this kids will begin to get an idea of the inherent capabilities of each medium. They will also discover how news changes when it is adapted for presentation in video and print. Finally, this exercise gives a small group, with little expertise, the chance to put together a production

Bruce Cost

in a few days.

The Activity

Hold a brief class discussion in which students list all possible areas covered by TV news (local news, sports, analysis, interviews, weather, etc.) Divide the class into groups of five or six. Each group should designate a director and an anchorman. Other roles are designated according to what the

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group has chosen to report about. With a newspaper as its primary resource, each group organizes, rehearses, and tapes a show complete with commercials, if desired. News shows may be as simple or as elaborate as the group chooses. All groups should work during planning and production in isolation from the others. When all the tapes have been completed, the class as a whole screens and compares the results.

The final production from each news team will be unique in spite of their abstracting news from the same resource dealing with the same events. As you can imagine, this exercise raises many points for discussion: What is news?; What is important news?; What is the relationship between the news and what really happened?; How do the people reporting the news effect the message?; How does TV effect the message?, etc.

Neighborhood Documentary

LARRY GOLDIN

There is a preference among many doing video with kids for "real-time" or "non-edited" tapes. The goal is to preserve the recorded incident just as it happened rather than producing tapes that are "filmic" in the sense that different shots are edited together in an order other than they were shot. This "video verite" school finds "filmic" a very pejorative term. Those involved in this kind of video state they are "process" and not "product" oriented. For them, editing is synonymous with distortion.

But editing is a process too. It brings to kids whole new order of perceptions, decisions and skills. We all edit our perceptions every day. We decide whose opinions to expose ourselves to and whose to avoid. For all their claims to the opposite, those doing video verite follow a similar selective process: they decide on what event to tape, how to tape it, who will be in it.

This activity is about the unavoidable subjectivity of selecting and editing processes. It involves making a historical documentary about the neighborhood in which your students live. This kind of video production is worth doing because kids often don't realize how their community has changed in respect to both the physical and social environment.

Further, kids who are members of various racial and ethnic minorities can learn about the cultural heritage which they no longer perceive in their day-to-day lives. Through interviewing old people, kids can come to see the past in real rather than mythic terms.

Mary Sheridan

The Activity

The documentary process starts with the kids deciding what they want to explore. They must find people who can give them first hand knowledge of the time or place of interest. Next, students should decide the questions that will get the information they need. Prepare kids to drop their planned questions and make up new ones when something or interest comes up which was not anticipated. The teacher should ask the person being interviewed if the crew can return at a later time since the kids often generate new questions after they have played back the tapes.

If kids have done a good job of questioning, it is not necessary for viewers to hear the questions posed on the final tape. Instead, in the edited tape there can be simple but effective sequences of people telling their own stories. The use of old photographs brings into play various researching skills. And such materials create visual excitement when comparing past to present. It is in the editing process that kids can intercut the shots of stills with the interviews while still maintaining the audiotrack of the interviewee's voice. This can be done easily with a standard editing deck by transferring audio and video signals one at a time. Finally, in the editing process kids will need to write and record the necessary introduction plus statements of narration.

When the tape has been edited, a special presentation should be planned for those who were in the tape. Another screening for parents can provide the kids with further insight into the history and changes of their environment.

Teaching Suggestions

Have the students practice trying not to provide too much of an answer in the phrasing of their questions. This is a common mistake. Have kids interview each other just to discover what the process is about. The less the interviewer says and the more the interviewee says, the more interesting the tape will be.

When kids are on the street doing interviews, have them playback the tape to the person they have just talked with. New questions and deeper responses often generate this way. Also, of course, kids can see if they got what they wanted.

Chuck Anderson

Video Animation

CHUCK ANDERSON

The question inevitably arises: Can animation be created with the videotape recorder? It is virtually impossible to animate still objects with the ½ inch videosystems. The continuous scanning operation of the camera negates the possibility of single frame shooting such as is done with Super 8 and 16mm movie cameras. Therefore, potential video cartoonists must look to other forms of animation, such as manipulation of objects in front of the camera. The basic retionale exists for all animation: you have complete control over whatever is to be videotaped. Here is one possibility: a variation of the ancient Chinese shadow play.

The Activity

A story or choice of characters for improvisation is made. Two dimensional puppets are created from heavy paper or cardboard. Movable limbs are achieved by connecting figures at their movable joints by means of masking tape and thread. The puppets are pressed against a translucent, taut rear projection screen. They are manipualted by long, fixed dowels that are fixed to key points of the body. The puppets and their operators are positioned on the darkened side of the screen; the video recording camera is on the other. Movie lights at low setting heightens resolution of video images.

Jeff Strickler

In-Depth Interviews

KIT LAYBOURNE

In most video programs, there are many, many activities in which kids conduct the kinds of interviews that they know so well from a lifetimes of watching television. This activity forces students to experience a different kind of interview. Doing in-depth interviews helps bring into relief the assumptions and stylistic conventions, the strengths and liabilities of standard TV fare. It also programs students to explore the unique qualities and abilities of portable video systems.

The Activity

The class divides into pairs - an interviewer who uses an external mike and the cameraperson who will do the taping. The pair select a person to interview whom neither of them knows well. The subject can be another student, a teacher, a younger person, a parent. A meeting time and place is arranged. Here is the assignment for the actual interview: Shooting begins immediately and runs for twenty minutes straight. At this point the tape is played back. The subject, the cameraperson and the interviewer watch it all. The camera is again hooked up and ten more minutes of interview are done. The talk in this second segment usually comes from what was experienced during the playback. During class, the entire in-depth interview is played again and discused by all.

Teaching Suggestions

At first there may be some frustration among the entire class as they watch these long interviews. Direct the discussion towards discovering and describing the set of expectations that broadcast television has created in all of us. You may need to ask the kids to begin developing a higher frustration level – they will need it for many viewing situations including tapes made by independent video artists as well as by themselves.

Generally, the effect of such in-depth interviews is very powerful. Individuals who have been taped appear complicated, three dimensional. They are individuals. Compare the quality and significance of this kind of interview with the quick and flat portraits that appear in most television documentaries, talk shows and news events. Finally, ask the kids to reflect upon their experiences as interviewer and cameraperson during these relatively long interviews. Have the kids compare their analysis of this activity with the feelings of power and control they have probably experienced during other activities like street-shooting or conducting an opinion survey with video.

Aldo Tambellini

Creative Electrography

ALDO TAMBELLINI

From my experience I developed an approach to the single system camera which I found both educational and creative - and also very appropriate to projects that could be completed within one session. I brought the students to the awareness of looking at their immediate environment so that their senses and response would be communicated through the camera. Every experience and every form around them contained some source of information in terms of the visual - the sounds, light and motion. In the manner that this information is brought together into a videotape - the reprocessing of information from the environment by each student - the student will then create a videotape which communicates his sensitivity to his surroundings.

The Activity

The students explore the places and activities that seemed commonplace to them before: - the street, the cars, the street markings, the forms of objects around them, the repetition of daily activities, a street vendor, a woman going to the laundry, a store on the block, goods on idsplay in the window, people passing, light, time and motion of a place. Through the sensitivity of a student all those elements contained within a situation are brought into a structure or form by each individual student - and they become the language of his videotape.

Teaching Suggestions

For example, we could take the city block, possibly the one next to the school, or where the student lives and look for those audio-visual non-verbal elements which he feels from the environment as well as his improvised speech and his gathering of information from people along the street. All this brought together in terms of time sequence - as they occur in real time - and by editing into the camera only - working around a particualr idea of theme - record that child's idea - an idea which he himself gives form to. All the audio-visual information - once brought back into the class and viewed by everybody through a monitor can be recycled for writing assignments and the presentation of class topics.

Reading: Experience Through Video

PETER HARATONIK

This activity is designed to integrate the use of viddeo with the development of basic reading skills. The use of "experience charts" in the teaching of reading to early childhood age pupils is based on the theory that a child's own experiences, once related to print symbology will have greater impact and meaning.

The Activity

A class event, such as a visit to a neighborhood store or park, is videotaped. Careful attention is paid to the teacher's role in the event and to individual children's reactions. Upon return to class, students are then asked to give one sentence "experiences" which are voiced over sections of the tape which lack content. This procedure is done on the second viewing of the tape. The tape is then played again, for a third time, and the experiences are listed on the chart in the typical manner i.e., "John says we had a good time," "Mary says the man at the store was nice." The tape can then be used to stimulate further comments on the part of the children and these are subsequently transcribed on to the chart. The chart is then used by the class as its "reader," one that is relevant and personal.

Teaching Suggestions

This activity should be spontaneous. There is no need for a tremendous amount of planning or preparation. In most cases, young children will have a great interest simply because they are involved in this group activity. Most students will be eager to participate, especially after seeing themselves on the screen. Therefore, make sure every student is recorded in soem way. During the voice-over procedure, try to elicit spontaneous comments as opposed to insisting that every child say something. Once the group hears back the first few comments and they are placed on the chart, the reluctant students will be more likely to participate.

Variations and Follow-Up

The experience charts can be used to develop both class and individual student "word banks." As students become familiar with the words and language they use, they can be used to develop "scripted" or non-spontaneous materials. Students can tape each other talking about personal feelings or concerns. Young children can also improvise skits and short plays which can be taped and used as a way to develop a book of class stories.

Resources That Will Help

Here is a brief list of print materials that we found helpful:

Chuck Anderson, The Electric Journalist, Praeger Publishers, New York 1973.

George Gordon and Irving Falk, The War of Ideas, Hastings House, New York, 1973.

Nicholas Johnson, How To Talk Back to Your Television Set, Little, Brown & Co., New York.

William Kuhns, Exploring Television, Loyola University Press, Chicago, 1971.

Kit Laybourne, editor, Doing the Media, Center for Understanding Media, 75 Horatio St., N.Y.C. 10014, 1972. $5.00.

Phillip Lopate, editor, Whole Word Catalogue, Teachers and Writers Collaborative, P.S. 3, 490 Hudson St., N.Y.C.

Grayson Mattingly & Welby Smith, Introducing the Single Camera VTR System, Scribners, N.Y.C.

J.B. Moriarty, The Third Eye, Utilization Section, The Ontario Educational Communications Authority, 2180 Yonge St., Toronto 295, Ontario, $1.00.

Evelyn Sarson, Action for Children's Television, Avon Books, New York, 1971.

Michael Shamberg, Guerilla Television, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York, 1971.

Viola Spolin, Improvisations for the Theater, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Ill.

Robert Stengel, editor, Cable Television and Education, The National Cable Television Assoc., 918 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, 1973.

Videofreex, The Spaghetti City Video Manual, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1973.

What's Doing

Some Video Programs Here and There

Alright, we're going to say it again. We know you've heard it before but we'll say it just once. We promise. "EDUCATION TODAY IS IN BAD SHAPE," Okay, so what else is new? And that's the point. A lot.

Most of us don't have to be told that, in general, schools have failed in their attempt at providing kids with knowledge of the basic survival skills they'll need in the 21st century. Yet, there is somehow a built in implication in the writings of today's critics that schools, in the past, didn't "Fail." There is a notion that somehow, in the mid-sixties we suddenly found ourselves in the midst of an educational crisis of unmanageable proportions. What's important, however, is to look back, just a bit, to see where we've come from, to understand that our ideas of what schools should be are recent history.

Much of this ideology can be directly traced to the influence of men like John Dewey along with the educational explosion that followed the second world war. The GI Bill gave many men a college education who otherwise never would have had a chance. The quonset hut campuses that dotted the landscape in the late forties provided second generation immigrants and the American working class with career opportunities previously inaccessible.

The Baby Boom

Meanwhile, back on the home front men and women were increasing the elementary school population. The baby boom was on. The concentric rings of suburban growth spread around the urban cores like rings around a stone dropped into water. The rapid-fire growth of the economy provided a tax base which enabled communities to pour tremendous resources into the schooling of their young. New schools call for new plans. The educational theorists had a field day. With an education population growing, educators were forced to become more conscious of community concerns and desires.

By the early 50s, the Doctor Spock generation was entering those bright shiny classrooms in the morning and rushing home in the afternoon to sit in front of the new American landscape - television.

Discovery of "The Ghetto"

Back in the inner cities those same Victorian structures that had housed three generations of immigrant children now faced a new wave of kids with which they were not familiar. The magnet of the suburb had drawn off much of the cities' experienced teaching and administrative staff leaving to those new college graduates, schools which were not prepared to deal with a growing third world population.

Yet changes did not take place despite the articulate writings of the "new" educators. Most inner city schools were powerless to affect change. The automobile left behind a blight which would increasingly decay urban centers across America. The blight was left to run rampant. Northeast liberals could decry segregation in the South and

react angrily to the images of national guardsmen escorting black children to their schools while red neck whites shouted obscenities. Their own schools were as bad. What the written law didn't say, the unwritten laws of economics and culture did.

By the sixties the blight had turned to rage and the fires of Watts, Detroit and Newark made Selma, Birmingham and Little Rock seem mild. Schools became centers of conflict. The predominantly white school boards were confronted by angry groups of blacks whose frustration had reached the point of explosion. The suburbs, too, were facing new challenges. A growing dissatisfaction among the country's young manifested itself in ever increasing hair lengths, higher decibel levels in music and the language of the drug culture. Dropouts were no longer inner city poor but the sons and daughters of those who thought they had left the airless streets and decaying buildings behind.

Schools again were faced with either challenging or adapting to these social changes. The length of someone's hair might become a court case. The presence of men in a women's dormitory could cause a campus strike. The language of the culture had changed - the "juvenile delinquents" of the 50s became the "culturally deprived" of the 60s. In the 50s you might have been a "drop out," but by the 60s you were just "following the beat of a different drum."

Things were changing. Schools were frightened. Educators were in a quandary.

New Voices

From 3,000 miles away a few voices were being heard. It was A.S. Neill who sent the idea of Summerhill crashing on the shores of North America. The advocates of the British open school grew in number. John Holt told us why children failed, and Jonathan Kozol told us how inner city schools were destroying the minds they were supposed to help create. Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner took the 60s rhetoric and made teaching more than honorable - they made it subversive!

And Piaget helped us find out how kids learn and Bettelheim showed us that there were various ways to help kids learn. Ivan Illich got us thinking about just how radical we really were in our educational theory. Charles Reich tried to explain why this was all happening to us now. And Alvin Toffler got us to think about education in the future tense.

And sure enough schools changed. The schools that looked pretty much the same in 1900, 1920 and 1945, were different places. Yet there was a problem. Teachers were asked to teach with tools and methods that they were unfamiliar with. The young teacher walking into a room with 30 desks had limited metaphors and often became the image of those teachers they once beheld, an image they didn't like. It became necessary to learn about new tools and luckily there were a few around to make

us smart.

New Technologies

It didn't take educators very long to see the potential of new technology as applied to education. Television became a focal point for that concern. By the early 60s educational television was a reality. Organized with the best intentions, much of the programming failed as it was based on the premise that "if it's on a TV screen, kids will watch it." Educators either failed to recognize or ignored the impact of film and TV on children. And it's not that we weren't warned. George Gordon tried to come to grips with education through television, John Culkin taught us that films and television were equally important to watch and that it was important for kids to be involved in the process of making their own films and television. And, of course, Marshall McLuhan taught us that media was more than just print, radio, television and film.

Peter Haratonik

So now, you can walk into a school and you're not shocked by the sight of a TV monitor or the presence of a movie flickering on the screen. It is not unusual for kids to be making movies or producing a TV show. Elementary schools broke down walls. Graffiti-stained, ink-welled desks made their way into antique stores. High schools let down their own hair and allowed students to decide on what they wanted to learn and how they wanted to learn it. From the Parkway Project in Philadelphia to the Berkeley Public schools, from the New School in
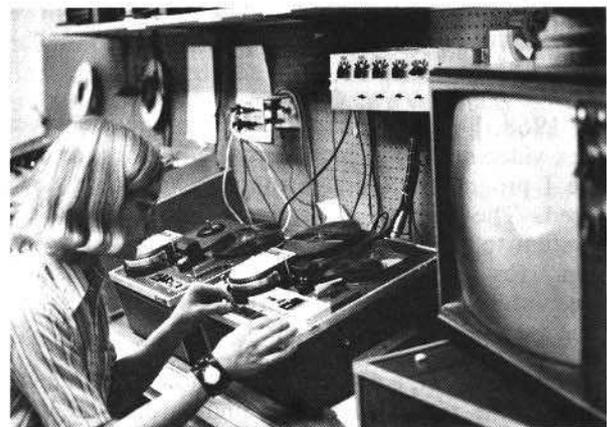
Peter Haratonik

North Dakota to the newly integrated schools of North Little Rock, schools were beginning to look and sound different.

But can we cope with the change? Teachers, unequipped to deal with the tasks before them, flounder. School systems, not knowing what should be taught (or why), return to "basics." And parents, not understanding the changes taking place around them, demand more structure and stability in their community schools.

And so, in education in general, we've reached a point of sitting back just a bit and reflecting and questioning. Where is it heading? Does the education work? What is significant in the new technology? And on and on it goes.

We all continually question our work with kids. As much as we dislike words like "accountability" or "behavioral objectives" we all still select our own goals and standards. Before we sat down to do this issue a number of people involved in the use of video in education shared problems with each other Each of us was most interested in hearing the "descriptions" of what was happening.

Is education in Bad Shape? Maybe. But things are better.

And so, here are descriptions of just a few of the many hundreds of programs going on around the country that are using video to make kids smart about themselves and the world around them. We don't pretend that they are representative (or even successful) - they're merely an eclectic group of statements from people who wanted to share something with you.

The Evolution of a Non-Program

CHUCK ANDERSON

Video has never been a budget item at Longwood High School, yet two students were selected to attend the 1970 White House Conference on Youth as media consultants. The school, located in eastern Long Island, New York has never had an artist-in-residence, yet during the last five years students and teachers have used video as an agent for social consciousness raising, and as a vehicle to document the education of the hearing handicapped. The school has never purchased any equipment, yet at present, video programming, news and weather spots, and public service announcements are broadcast in the student commons via a home-made closed circuit video/audio system. On any given afternoon, Longwood students may be found looking through trash piles for speakers and discarded television receivers; they may be participating in a student intern program at a local cable television station; or they may be moving through a shopping center, conducting video interviews about local politics.

Early Work

In 1968, Longwood High School was given an Ampex video system (1 inch), acquired earlier for a Title I program in the elementary schools but never used. The English Department requisitioned the system to produce a bi-weekly electronic "newspaper" for viewing in study halls. Programs included interviews, student politics, film clips, fashion shows, news, etc.

Later that year, a dispute arose among the students over some racial slurs in an underground newspaper. Borrowing a ½ inch, portable VTR unit from George Stoney, (of the Alternate Media Center), the Longwood videomakers were given permission by the administration to follow the course of the disturbance. It was hoped that if students were given the opportunity to sound off in front of the television camera, a process could be improvised that might create better understanding of the issues and thereby prevent the kind of violence that had closed the schools down for a half day the year before. The video crew covered the events from the initial confrontation in the student commons between angry blacks and the administration to a series of meetings between student representatives and school leaders held during the rest of the day. (This process is documented in detail in Chuck Anderson's forthcoming book, VIDEO POWER, to be published by Praeger in the fall of 1974.) An edited videotape was shown to the entire Longwood student body the next day, followed by a series of discussions on the issues. There was no violence. The school stayed open.

During the next couple of years, Longwood students continued to develop their skills as videomakers, using the old Ampex system in the school, and borrowed equipment for out-of-school street shooting. In 1971, the school acquired a SONY Rover series portapak system, again through a little-used Title I elementary school program. At this time, the English Department began to seriously think about including TV communications in the curriculum.

Chuck Anderson

Kinescoping

In 1972-73, a Longwood video crew was asked to make a documentary about the education of the deaf at a nearby BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) school for the hearing handicapped. This project developed into one of the most ambitious efforts yet undertaken in our non-program. Working on a volunteer basis over a period of 18 months, Longwood students got a great deal of experience both in video and in working with the handicapped. Production costs, such as a day of editing at the Egg Store in New York City, and the making of a kinescope at Rombex Studios in New York, were funded by BOCES, who was becoming increasingly enthusiastic about the project. The finished product, a 28-minute 16mm. film (kinescope) called "To Break the Silence," has been shown on local cablevision, and has been acquired by the Suffolk County Library System with other libraries expressing interest in acquiring a print. Not just the video team members benefited from

Chuck Anderson

this project. The teachers of the hearing handicapped found that they had to re-examine and in some cases update their teaching methods. It became clear to administration, teachers and participating parents that both present and future parents of deaf students needed specific and positive ideas about how their children may learn to communicate with the world.

Old Beginnings

Life goes on at Longwood. Students grow up, graduate, get interested in other things. This year, the Longwood video non-program seems to be starting all over again, back at the beginning, but with a slight difference. Video is now part of the English curriculum. Teachers from other disciplines have begun to make off-the-air recordings of science and history specials for selective viewing in school. The school is hooked into the Grassroots TV Network, and recently students were able to watch a tape about Wounded Knee, made by Native American Video.

On the floor above the student commons, there is a new room called the Radio and Television Studio. Longwood's closed circuit system is continuing to grow as a result of student energy and inventiveness, Student Council generosity (about $100 worth of coaxial cable, connectors, and boosters), and administrative coercion. (The latter took place when our principal talked the middle school principal into giving us three monitor/receivers from his brand new closed circuit system in a recently-constructed building.) We're still using the two Title I machines. By means of workshops that we've conducted, the non-program now shares the portapak with five other schools in a 4,500-student system, where austerity budgets and split sessions are a way of life.

The new video group is producing a daily show called "AM/Longwood", consisting of news, music, interviews, weatherspots, and public service announcements. "The more things change, the more they remain the same." However, we're hoping to repeat some of the good things of the past. We've started a series of exchange tapes with other schools in Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., and New York — hopefully they will be as effective as the one we did with Kit Laybourne and the Concord Academy (Massachusetts) last year. We're negotiating with BOCES about a tape on the emotionally disturbed; the only problem is that they're as tight for money as we are. We've finally gotten through to the school board; they bought us about $100 worth of videotape last year. Maybe one of these days, we'll be able to start building a tape library. The most important thing is that there is a growing enthusiasm for video among the students and faculty. One of our major goals this year is to see if we can get the cablevision people to interconnect the six schools that are spread out over the 52 square mile school district, and to encourage them to do more public access programming.

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Video in a Therapeutic Community

BRUCE COST

My student population is unique. The school in which I work is part of a residential treatment program for adolescent drug addicts. Over 80% of the boys and girls are from New York City, with the remainder coming from upstate New York communities. Prior to admittance most of the kids have attended school sporadically and have a history of hard drug use and involvement in crime. Most all are alumni of city youth houses and come to this campus via criminal or family court. There is one admission requirement: an indication on a kid's part that he wants to gain some control over his life and break loose from the circle of judges, courts, social workers and drugs that dominate his existence.

Holy Cross School in Rhinebeck, N.Y., can be viewed as a "therapeutic community," mixing 85 students with 80 staff members (including psychiatrist, psychologists, social workers, administrators, counselors and a school staff of 30.) The campus, 90 miles north of New York on the Hudson, is a 1000 acre facility owned by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York. State child-care and education funding contribute to the maintenance of the institution.
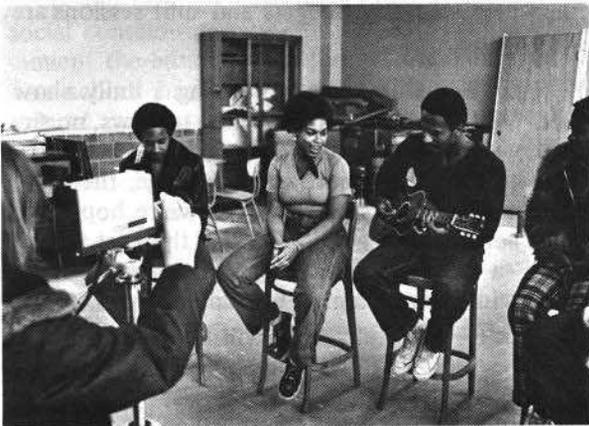
Bruce Cost

The school was voted a state school district unto itself by the state legislature, and as a result is a self-supporting institution within an institution. The school atmosphere can best be described as innovative. Teachers receive full support for whatever they feel will turn a kid on educationally. The school's willingness to experiment has recently won it a large state grant to begin a pilot program in outdoor education. Classes have ten students, at most, and several courses have two instructors.

I work as a teacher and am responsible for the development of a media program for the school. This, includes videotape. However, the use of videotape is not limited to the classroom. And since I have been the most vociferous advocate of the use of videotape throughout the institution, I am involved in developing uses for it in all phases of the program. Three broad categories are necessary to describe our uses for videotape at Holy Cross: education; therapy; and staff training.

Education

Typically, students here are not only turned off to schools and institutions, but in many cases have a hard time functioning in anything resembling a structured activity. Class periods in which the teacher lectures for 40 minutes are seldom successful and class discussions cannot be counted on to involve everyone. But these students consistently react positively to involvement with videotape. They like the equipment and its power to record them.

For example, I have found that kids who are unwilling to spend time discussing a topic in seminar fashion will thoroughly explore the same subject as "experts" on a TV panel show. Because, while they may not have heard many after-dinner discussions of ideas or events in their homes, they have seen this on TV. And they can readily identify with this format. Plus, the playback is reinforcing. They see themselves in brand new roles - positive ones which they can enjoy.

As with most videotape programs, we use this tool heavily for various dramatic activities. For these students, however, learning to explore emotions in a controlled situation is particularly important. Learning to exercise emotional control in a dramatic situation may help these kids exercise similar control in real-life situations. Tape is tangible evidence of accomplishment. Videotape drama gives them the rare chance to excel in a classroom.

Student camera crews of two and three have recorded various situations and events on campus in documentary fashion. For example, they have invaded classrooms to record the mood and important activities of the class session. On playback, the teacher watches himself conduct a class, the students view their classroom attitude and behavior, and the camera crew is forced to really observe and understand the classroom environment because of their responsibility to record it well.

Therapy

It is hard to distinguish between the educational and therapeutic value of videotape, particularly in a Holy Cross classroom. However, the value of videotape, in a strictly therapeutic sense is easy to see in both individual and group therapy sessions. The therapist or group leader can play back a recorded session and stop the action at important points for illustration or discussion.

This past summer I was involved in an experimental group designed to orient new kids to the program. The staff psychiatrist, the head of Social Services and I acted as group leaders and tried to get the kids to examine their own behavior and the circumstances which brought them to Holy Cross. The technique was videotape recording. They acted out situations they share in common - from encounters with the courts to family scenes. This "psychodrama" was then played back, frozen at various points and discussed, focusing on the relationship a particular role has had on the life of the participant. For example, if someone is to play a parole officer in a courtroom scene or a grandmother in a family scene, he must begin to understand the perspective of that person. When a kid begins to do this, he begins to examine his own role in the proper perspective. And it becomes easier for him to understand how his behavior resulted in his present placement.

Staff Training

For any staff member who deals directly with kids, supervised role-play followed by group discussion is valuable training. A teachers' workshop can choose common problem situations to role-play and record. On playback the group can decide on the best technique for handling a classroom fight, for example. The role-playing participant will adapt these techniques to his own personality, thereby helping him be more effective in his job
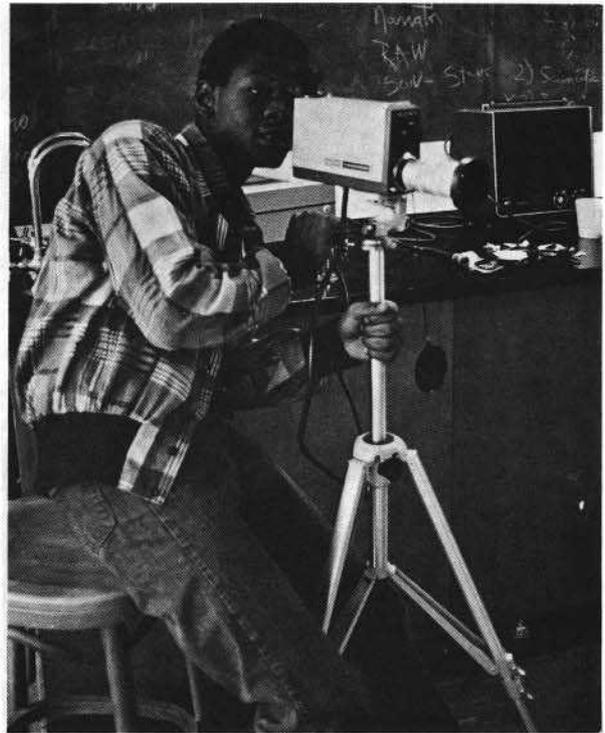
Bruce Cost

and establishing a more consistent approach to dealing with the kids. Sessions such as these allow the staff participants to support each other as well as share experiences and ideas. And it is valuable to break roles and look at situations from a different vantage point.

Videotape is having an impact on the program at Holy Cross which I hope is indicated in this much abridged look at our use of this tool. It seems to be one of the few known quantities that positively affects the adolescent population we deal with, in both a behavioral and educational sense. Videotape seems to have been specifically designed for use in our environment.

A New Approach in Higher Education

JANE GARMEY and JEFF BUSH

The Thematic Studies Program (TSP) was started at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY) in September 1972, with the help of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The program is designed to make college learning a more personal, relevant and immediate experience for the student, who instead of taking a number of unrelated courses, concentrates on a specific theme and during the course of the school year discovers how a number of different disciplines contribute to an understanding of this theme. One of the program's assumptions is that learning goes on in many

ways both inside and outside the classroom, through large group meetings, small seminars, independent research, field trips and learning based in the community. Students are also given the opportunity to design and carry out individual projects which range tremendously in scope and design.

From the beginning, the use of video has been seen as an important part of TSP and we have struggled to come to grips with the problem of how to use it effectively and how to best integrate it into the

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Jane Hoffer

structure of the program. We knew our purpose was not to train a few students to be media experts but rather to make video accessible to a large number of students and let them become familiar with its possibilities, so that they could use it creatively both in and out of the classroom.

Open Video Workshop

One fact that has gradually emerged is that there is not as much to teach about video as there is to learn. Or to put it another way, learning for the most part is a self-discovering process. On the basis of this we have evolved an open learning situation, known as the Video Workshop. This is held twice a week for both day and night students.

The Workshop is open to all 250 students in TSP. There are no rules about attendance, and no signing up in advance — you just come if you want to, and you work at your own pace. The workshop sessions are held in a multi-purpose studio, which also serves as a rather makeshift student lounge and activity center. Some students attend the workshop because they want to use video in their projects, others have no such plans but just want to see how it works, and some are drawn to it simply because they may have been meeting a friend in the lounge while the workshop was in progress. Equipment can be taken out for weekends and is returned for the workshop sessions.

In addition to giving students a chance to shoot, edit, mix, experiment, playback and trip over wires, the workshop provides a forum for exchanging ideas, developing project plans, getting critical input, and obtaining audience reaction to tapes.

Students have used video for a wide variety of projects, ranging from psychodrama to studies of different problems and issues within the city. Having a variety of video equipment has also attracted a lot of interesting people, who either want to see our tapes, show theirs, or use some of our equipment. Setting up informal reciprocal relationships with groups interested in video is something that is starting to happen. Arrangements with neighborhood schools, professional acting troupes, and other institutions engaged in higher education have given our students an opportunity to broaden the scope of their experience.

There's still a lot of work to be done, in overcoming a deep-seated resistance to hardware that seems to exist within many students and faculty members. There is still a lot of learning for us all to do, but with video that seems to be the name of the game.

Student-Centered ETV Broadcasting

ELLEN MILES

It's fortunate that there are many opportunities today for students to actually use videotape and learn about its possibilities. It's unfortunate that most of these experiences have been limited by the fact that when a tape is completed, there is no broadcast possibility.

That's changing! At WNVT - Channel 53, students in the Northern Virginia School Systems are being given the opportunity to produce their own television programs. The twenty minute shows will be aired several times each week during school program hours. A total of 24 productions are being financed through the cooperative efforts of the nine participating school districts.

The participants for these programs are from 7th to 12th grade classes. Their objective is to appeal to a 5th - 8th grade language arts audience. A broad spectrum of topics are being considered for the programs. Some possible topics coming up are: ESP—Powers of the Mind as Communication; Non-Verbal Communication or Body Language; and two shows back to back on how to produce a one act play and, following it, a student produced one act play.

Goals

There are several objectives of the O.U.T.L.E.T. (The Open Use of Television for Language Experiences Together) series. The first is to familiarize these student producers with what is involved in the production of a television show (while realizing that this is a real experience in that there is a large audience who will be watching.) We hope that this will keep students in touch with peers in different areas of the state. It is a requirement of the funding school systems that the shows offer something to those watching as well as to those participating. . . and rightly so! the basic concern is "communication."

However, most of the kids involved are far from experienced so we're trying not to set false expectations or demands. We would consider a program worthwhile if teamwork processes are learned and observable. The WNVT staff is trying very hard to transmit these skills to the student teams. If successful, this cooperative effort should have tremendous effect on both the individual shows and the series.

that as many students as possible should be involved in the project and that it truly be student centered.

This called for workshops in orienting teacher team members as to their roles in addition to establishing student workshop sessions. Fortunately, the School Services Division of WNVT is staffed with Program Utilization Specialists who are trained in team building, problem-solving, and leadership skills. Thus, right on down the line, everyone was involved in constant learning experiences.

There are two WNVT staff members working full-time on O.U.T.L.E.T. - Duffy Farrand and myself. It has been our function to implement the conference objectives, organize the schedules and fill any needs the teams have as we move along. One of the first things we did, was to design an orientation tape which we produced to go along with a studio tour.

The orientation packet gives definitions of many television terms, a sample script and run-down of the orientation tape, a guiding outline of where

WNVT/Channel 53

Planning and Training

The basic guide for a series of student-centered productions was set up at a conference this past summer. In attendance were WNVT personnel and educators from the schools. Brainstorming techniques were used in achieving the final outline. At this point that outline is being expanded and modified as the need arises.

It was the general feeling at the summer conference

students should try to be time-wise during the six weeks, and an addenda of the processes involved during the period. Each member is also given a copy of the taping and orientation schedules so they are in touch with the what and when of the other groups.

Steering Committee and Money Matters

There is a steering committee, composed of equal numbers of students and adults, who make deci-

sions on any conflict of topics, evaluation, procedures, publicity, and any other questions that arise. This group meets regularly and gets the chance to bring up feelings, suggestions, and questions which have emerged from the group they represent. Since we're dealing with six groups and many team members, this representative committee has been very effective in keeping information channels open. For example, at the most recent meeting the need for a big publicity campaign was discussed and we are all proceeding with the suggestions and ideas brought up.

Financially, we're running on a VERY tight budget. Film is out! There are simply no funds for equipment or processing. Many of the schools do have portapak equipment that they can use for on

location inserts.

The main thing we are encouraging is creativity – figuring out ways to get the effect without fantastic technical capabilities. The three teams we've seen so far are exceeding our expectations. When I asked one group about their scenery needs they told me that they felt if their show was good enough, it would speak for itself. FANTASTIC! With attitudes like that, we feel the series can't miss. Speaking for Duffy and myself, the opportunity to work on this project becomes more and more meaningful every day. Perhaps other groups will look to Northern Virginia as an example where audiences are getting the chance to determine and create their own viewing preferences.

Video for Migrant Children

DAVID JONASSEN

The nomadic tribes of migrants that stream into New Jersey annually are deprived - educationally, socially, and even physically. The most disenfranchised group of people in our nation, the migrant parent faces exploitation, the child, discrimination. Family incomes are often less than welfare provides, and the future is sadly predictable. The children, when located, normally attend antiquated rural schools, only to be ostracized and placed in the back of the room with a package of crayons or a book they cannot read.

In order to provide a meaningful educational program for the migrant child, the New Jersey Office of Migrant Education, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, operating on ESEA Title I funds, has developed Pilot V. Using public and commercial broadcast television and closed circuit classroom video, Pilot V undertakes the task of educating migrant children in the basic communication/language arts and math skills through professionally developed curricula tapes. This program also aims at enlightening the public about the plight of the migrant worker through programming via commercial and/or public broadcast stations. Because self-image enhancement is accepted as a necessary precursor to skill development by Pilot V, classroom video productions and exercises comprise the third video approach used in the project.

Televised Curriculum and Classroom Feedback

The primary goal of Pilot V is curriculum development and production of educational materials (with color video tape lessons as a base) to instruct migrant children in the rudimentary reading and math skills. These tapes are designed to supplement

regular classroom instruction and they are employed at the discretion of the teacher. The first series of bi-lingual tapes on beginning consonant sounds is nearing completion. A subsequent series on elementary math concepts is ready for production.

These tapes are the culmination of a curriculum effort conducted by a team, comprised of teachers hired from migrant communities and a director, that was conceived by a comprehensive needs assessment. The specific needs of migrant children are translated into lesson plans and objectives, scripted by professional writers and produced in an in-house production studio on 1-inch color VTR's. After editing, the tapes are transferred to ½ inch tape and distributed, along with teacher's guides and supportive media materials developed by the curriculum team, to the six participating school districts. The lessons are conducted on an individual or small-group basis by district teachers, supervised by the Pilot V teacher from the curriculum staff.

Each school is equipped with a color monitor and ½ inch VTR with a black and white camera. This camera provides the basis for the video feedback stage where peer-production occurs. The students are engaged in video activities designed to ameliorate the deficient self-concept of the migrant child. Implicit in this phase of the program is the belief that through confronting one's self in the monitor during classroom video productions and activities, the child is capable of developing an objective, unclouded self-image which can then be applied to developing the necessary educational skills.

Organization and Funding

Funds to conduct the Pilot V project filter down from the Division of Compensatory Education of the Office of Education through New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Curriculum of Instruction, to the New Jersey Office of Migrant Education and finally to Pilot V through its local Education Agency.

The project employs a curriculum staff consisting of a director and two special assistants along with teachers who have been working with migrant students. The production and administrative staff consist of a television producer/director, an industry/media coordinator, an educational media specialist, an administrative liaison officer and a project director. It is the goal of the entire staff to develop the most effective, meaningful instruction possible to serve the migrant child.

For additional information about the project, please write to:

Pilot V Project
dpr Building
Box 1000, N.W. Blvd.
Newfield, N.J. 08344
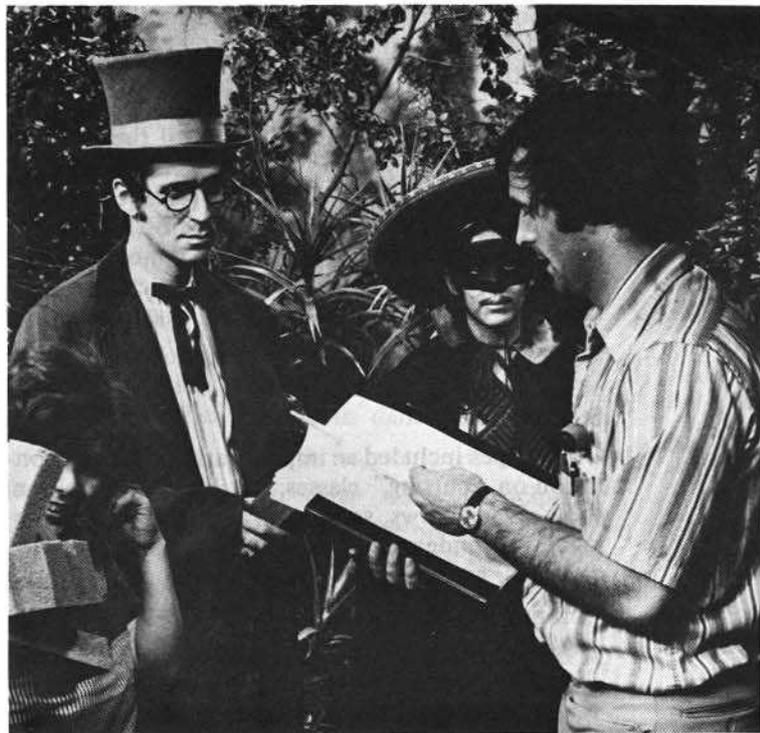
David Jonassen

Project TV: Video as a Second Language

JIM KEARNEY

The videotape medium allows students disenchanted with print-oriented education to communicate ideas and emotions hitherto locked up by semi-literacy. This development of skills of communicating (including reading and writing) was the goal of Project TV, which I taught under a Federal Title I grant at Great Neck North Senior High from January through June of 1973.

A large contingent of foreign-born students learning English were among participants in Project TV. Video let them see their own pronounciation and usage, and mistakes were corrected in instant replay. One student called this "proof" of progress - an important commodity for students very insecure about their verbal ability.

Minority Media Spokesmen

Our small studio was equipped with an Ampex 1 inch VTR and 2 cameras. It provided a comfortable atmosphere and students often spoke frankly about their emotions and attitudes. Sometimes we taped discussions of school life, at other times discussions of a poem written by a student. Once, an intelligent student from the Dominican Republic complained that she had been misquoted by the school paper on her comments at a symposium on racial understanding. We taped her logical, impas-

sioned response and showed it to the interested parties. In a different situation, the same student gave a report on a community meeting she'd attended on the topic of bilingual education vs. other styles, and her long account (of the meeting held in Spanish) provided valuable feedback to the school. It's specially important to train spokesmen from minorities to use media more effectively.

Some students exhibited aptitude and interest in professional broadcasting. One such student became proficient in the operation and "language" of the camera. He staged an impromptu bilingual news program, using the blackboard as a cue card, gave a long presentation on TV production in Spanish to another class, and researched, wrote and taped a documentary on his homeland, using stills enhanced by cuts and fades.

There were many poem readings by black students; both original student work and classics like "Heritage" and "Landlord, Landlord." Stills from the career of Martin Luther King accompanied a reading from his rules for nonviolence. A student discussed the difference between the real Billie Holliday and the distorted image in the film. He also fulfilled an assignment for another class by producing an illustrated tape on black periodicals. This same student, president of the Black Student Union, supervised

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the most complex and ambitious project of the year, a documentary on Black History. Students selected the areas of the topic to be covered, chose stills from various sources, added music tracks, poems, and speeches. Re-edited until the tape became brittle, it was shown during Black History week. Then the student-producer remade the tape completely. This final tape, in spite of the technical limitations of a 1 VTR system, is more cinematic and entertaining than any instructional film, tape or filmstrip on the topic that I've seen.

Studio Shows

Other tapes included an improvisation of a confrontation on "cutting" classes, an illustrated fashion show, Black News, spoofs of advertising, a monologue on undersea life and communication with dolphins, and vehement discussions about jobs, the future, and college.

A different type of production was aimed at integrating intensive verbal drills with the quiz show format.
Questions based on pronounciation, spelling, synonyms, antonyms and rhyming pairs of words were flashed on the monitor, a student would signal and have his answer taped. A student emcee kept up the swift pace, making it an enjoyable exercise. We noticed that if the same question were repeated in different games, the students always remembered. General knowledge and sports quizzes were also successful. Our version of Password was very popular. In particular, the sports quiz revealed stunning verbal and quantitative achievement, obvious-
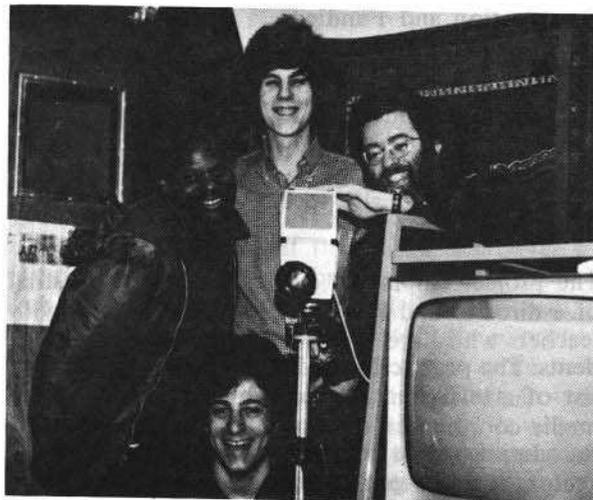
Ricardo Wainsztein

ly resulting from significant outside reading on the topic, among students put off by most school work.

The year ended with a tour of the NBC studios in Manhattan, tying in our work with an appreciation of the mass media. Hopefully, some of the students are now media-literate enough to understand or even alter some of the effects of the media environment. They'd better be, because never before, as Huxley said, have so many listeners been at the mercy of so few speakers.

Video isn't a panacea for the communications needs of students, but schools, our most print-oriented institutions, must begin to work with, not against, the media to which students have tuned their senses.

Video Catalyst

PETER HARATONIK

On Broadway a group of 10-year-olds are taping a video play in a neighborhood store. About four miles away on the Lower East Side a group of sixth graders are preparing to tape speakers at an Earth Day Celebration. Two thousand miles west, noted filmmaker Stan Brakage is using a portable video system in his discussion of image making with high school students. And in Birmingham, Alabama, a crew from a local Educational TV station is preparing for a visit from a New York filmmaker who will work with students in the production of a major local television show.

All these events have something in common besides video. They're all part of programs planned and coordinated by the Center for Understanding Media in New York. The Center, founded in 1969 by

John Culkin, is a non-profit organization which specializes in projects involving young people and the new media.

What the Center seeks to do is to plan, develop, and carry out a variety of activities which will ensure a better understanding of media in its broadest sense - to create a totally integrated program in the arts and humanities. Our work is primarily being done in three areas: teacher training, model site programs and the development of projects involving professional media artists in teaching roles. In implementing goals and programs designing these three areas are deeply integrated. For us to develop an in-school project without adequately training teachers (who in most cases are not equipped to deal with new technologies in either a practical or

theoretical manner) would be disastrous. Similarly, to bring working professionals into an educational environment without adequate supervision or training, would only cause confusion and lead to possible conflict between the goals of schools and those of an individual artist. Model projects that we design hopefully provide a way in which to adequately foster creative interchange.

Since 1969, a major emphasis of the Center has been in developing programs which use video as a tool in this integrative process of understanding all media. During the 1971-2 school year, the Center conducted a pilot program in media education on the elementary school levels, in the Mamaroneck, N.Y. Public Schools. Funded by the Ford Foundation, the year's work resulted in a major resource book, DOING THE MEDIA, along with the knowledge that video would play an ever increasing role in future Center activities. From the beginning, me-

dia artist Milo Dalbey has served as full-time artist-in-residence with the Mamaroneck School System.
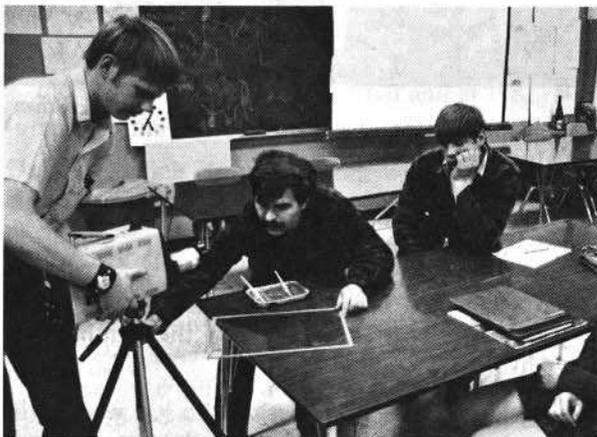
Other Pilot Programs

This initial grant led to the development of a number of on-site school projects during the following year. Thirty New York City school teachers were promised scholarships to study at the Center's 1972 Summer Graduate Institute. During the school year, the Center assisted a dozen schools in starting film and video projects funded through a grant from the New York Community Trust. The Center's role was becoming that of a video catalyst, providing expertise and basic equipment in hopes that the schools would carry on the program. In many cases they did.

Our successes surprised us. One school in Brooklyn was able to create a Media Center which included the active use of video. A junior high school in Staten Island devoted a year to using video to explore the complexities of the political process. Other New York City schools responded well to assistance offered by the Center and countless video activities were carried out by students, parents and teachers throughout the city and at our suburban site in Mamaroneck. A part of both our city and

suburban projects was the idea that a working professional in one of the media arts could, by his or her presence, provide rich insight and experience towards understanding the impact of art and technology on our culture. A number of residencies by video artists provided schools with new inputs.

Artist-in-the-Schools

While we were conducting artist residencies at home, a new program was developed nation-wide. The Artist-in-the-Schools program, funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Office of Education, added a film component to the work already being done in dance, poetry, and visual arts.

During the first year, three states participated through their local state arts councils. But by the summer of 1972 - one year later - close to 30 states had requested and been granted funding for residencies in film and video. The Center's role was to provide services to all arts councils and school systems involved. In the summer of 1972 more than 70 teachers and administrators representing close to 100 school systems received graduate level training in New York. Exceeding even our own expectations, courses in video production were by far the most popular. Video had obviously had an impact on schools apart from our own developmental activities. This interest has not waned in the interim.
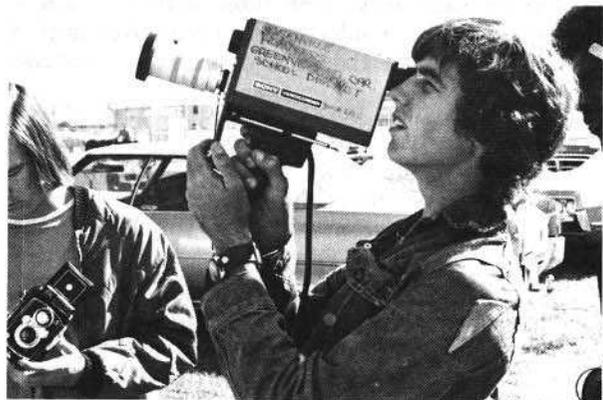
A recent Delphi study in futurecasting conducted by the Center is a case in point. The overwhelming consensus among a cross section of media educators was that video would be the most popular production tool five years from now, and that print materials on video would equal those available on film.

Participants from Artist-in-the-Schools sites were assisted by the Center staff in developing programs suitable to their own needs and resources. The most important factor was the pairing of an artist with each participating school system. In this process, a number of schools indcated a preference for an individual who not only had skills in the area of film production but also someone who was competent in the use of video equipment. In many cases, schools already owned thousands of dollars

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worth of hardware (purchased for teacher training or use by the football team.) Occasionally, teachers of media would even find the opened boxes languishing deep in the bowels of supply closets. With a little knowledge of video, they successfully liberated them. Visiting artists reacted to available VTR gear in the same way: even those with little intention of working in video found themselves unable to ignore tools in the face of limited resources.

Since the program began, well over 150 professional media artists have participated in it. And not only have these artists provided schools with worthwhile experiences, but the program has also developed a creative new way to supplement the artists' incomes. The Center is expanding its Artist-in-the-Schools activities with funds provided by the Manpower Development Training Act of the U.S. Office of Education which are being used, basically, to increase the earning capacity of independent film and video artists.

Graduate Media Studies

The training of both teachers and filmmakers has been carried out in conjunction with the Center's overall development of a graduate school for advanced training in media studies. The Center entered into an affiliation with Antioch College in 1972. In the fall of 1973, the Center for Understanding Media began offering a fully accredited program leading to a degree of Master of Arts in Media Studies. Of the 100 students presently registered almost half of these are actively involved in some area of video studies. The Center, through its graduate school, is able to provide students with access to 1/2 inch video recording and editing systems, both for course work, independent studies and projects which educators wish to develop in schools. In this way, the Center's role as catalyst

is multiplied by active participation among graduate students.

A Case Study

Within this cursory look at the Center's activities, it might be worthwhile to provide some details about one video program that has had significant impact upon both the kids and the community they live in.

Ms. Teri Mack is a video artist who has worked in the past as a video specialist for the young Filmmakers Foundation in their Lower East Side storefront facility. Teri's decision to work in New York City public schools was based on two factors: her desire to become more actively involved in the New York community in which she lives and her wish to develop a close working relationship in a school that has active community participation.

P.S. 75 in the heart of New York's multi-ethnic West Side, is one of the open corridor schools assisted by Lillian Weber and the City University of New York's Open Education Workshop. The bi-lingual facility has sought to involve as many aspects of community life as possible. One such group from the area, the Teachers and Writers Collaborative. has worked in the school for the past three years developing creative writing workshops. As part of this program, video was added two years ago as a means of dramatizing short plays and poems.

Teri's work is supported through the cooperative efforts of both the Teachers and Writers Collaborative and the Center for Understanding Media. Teri describes the program as follows:

"This is P.S. 75's third year with videotape, but its first with a full-fledged video special-

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ist. As the person experienced with both the limitations and the potential of the portapak, I am responsible for training as many people as possible to use it, scheduling our single portapak's use and most important, working closely with kids, helping them develop ideas for the production of quality videotapes. . ."

The Open Corridor environment gives Teri the chance to have kids come together in loosely-structured groups, meeting in the comfortable, carpeted surroundings of a quiet room made available to them. But the classroom environment is not always conducive to the free, creative use of the medium. As Teri points out:

"In a formal classroom, video is used in a highly structured manner. There's little opportunity for experimentation and in an attempt to have every child participate, no one child is able to get an intense video experience. We work outside the classroom, in our own space, the auditorium, on the street, or in someone's home. We work with flexible hours, depending on what the situation calls for. Obviously, the school's support is essential and at P.S. 75 we have such support."

Deciding which classes to work with is not an easy choice to make. Obviously, an outside specialist like Teri has only limited time and if the program is to work she must concentrate her efforts with only a few kids. This leads to the problem of how to generate school-wide interest and support. In Teri's work, she has developed some ideas:

"There was an obvious need to train teachers who were interested but a workshop that began at the beginning of the school year failed because of my lack of understanding of the tremendous demands upon a teacher's time and energy. It became necessary to individualize instruction, training them during their free periods."

And so, the teachers of an open corridor school become involved in the process of individualized learning themselves. Teri also works with other school personnel - paraprofessionals, and specialists - to give them video expertise so that they may use the medium in their work in remedial reading, drug counselling or art.

Training "The Community"

It has been noted that the community plays an important role in day-to-day activities at P.S. 75 and as a group, were actively brought in to the video program. Teri recalls:

"At the first parents' meeting of the year, I announced the start of both afternoon and evening video workshops. In spite of heavy work and family demands, people signed up. The equipment was made available to be used overnight and on weekends by parents to make documentaries about the school."

This aspect of the program has been the most significant change over previous years. The parents are now pushing for the continuation of P.S. 75's video project without the need for outside support of specialists or free equipment loan.

As part of the community outreach program, cable television is used extensively to broadcast tapes produced in the school. P.S. 75 now has a weekly TV show going out over the public access channel of both of New York's cable systems. Every Thursday at both 2 PM and 7 PM, kids and their parents get the opportunity to watch neighborhood documentaries, video plays written and produced by kids and countless other variations of TV formats. For those who don't have cable, viewing is done in the school cafeteria and parents gather at each other's apartments for viewing.

Teri's unique relationship to the school is a significant factor. As she puts it,

"I am not part of the school system, I am not a "teacher". I am not a specialist hired by the school board. I'm an outsider and the kids sense this difference. Yet, I am, at the same time very much a teacher – someone who wants to help kids learn and collaborates with them in that process, someone who makes a lot of demands on them. It is important for kids to be around adults who are alternatives to both teachers and parents, adults they can talk to, be friends with and learn with."

For us, the P.S. 75 experience has been a marvelous example of how various elements of a community can work together to create learning situations that otherwise would not have been possible. Teri's work is not a guaranteed aspect of the school's curriculum. It can never be assumed that the funding will be available to continue the program. But with

Peter Haratonik

Teri's role as catalyst, it is hoped that the community and school will find its own way to continue this project which they feel is important.

Bridging the Media Gap

We at the Center are constantly drawn between two poles: at the same time that we are very conscious of our role in the creation of a new field, we also must be even more conscious of ways in which to serve that field. As video specialists, we seek to expand our knowledge and to explore the full benefits of the technology's potential. We want to make ourselves smarter. Yet, as video educators, we must continually face new generations of video learners who have the same problems and ask the same questions as everyone else beginning video.

As we can, we will continue activities which promulgate media studies in educational settings and assist those individuals and groups who have creative inputs to render. There is lots to do in this emerging field. As John Culkin, Director of the Center for Understanding Media said: "Anything that helps the child to understand and control the media environment is a good thing. Any way the media can help the child to define himself and his relation with others is a good thing."

Inner-City Video

JON DUNN

The Communications Experience, an E.S.E.A. Title I project in Philadelphia public and parochial schools, designs its projects to increase understanding of and competency in the basic skills of our culture and also to equip teachers to play an important part in this process. These basic skills go far beyond language and quantitative competency and include a broad range of basic communication skills such as media competency (the ability to decode and encode signals in mass media and environmental media) and understanding human interrelationships. These basic skills enable students to begin to deal effectively with themselves as valuable human resources and with the ever pervasive electronic/technological environment. It is often pointed out that children entering school today will be under the age of 35, in the year 2001. So that an additional, indispensable skill becomes the ability to deal effectively with the profound changes in the basic structures of our society.

It is hardly accidental that the artist-educators who comprise the staff and consultants of The Communications Experience all see themselves moving toward a less specialized vision of the world. It is not simply a throwback to a Renaissance mind set, but a phenomenon that recognizes the nature of the rapid changes within our culture that demand extreme flexibility and adaptability among those striving to retain their humanity amid a growing technocracy. The recognition of these concerns is hardly limited to this group. On the contrary, educators and social scientists throughout the world have voiced with clarity and vision the need for this kind of viewing of the future. The programs of The Communications Experience confront these concerns and attempt practical learning strategies.

In working toward our goals, we deal with a number of media tools including video. Film, photo-graphy, audio tape, radio, synthesizers, maps, newspapers, cities, towns, woods, clothing, language, group interaction analyses, and institutions are other media through which we work to prepare teachers and students and ourselves to deal with our multiple worlds.

Let me sketch out a few examples of how The Communications Experience has used video over the past five years:

– Fifth grade students studying the urban environment have videotaped its institutions in action (hospitals, police, sports clubs, businesses, etc.) One high point was a tape of a Mayor Frank Rizzo press conference. One young interviewer asked, "Is there any connection between your appointment of Joe Rizzo as fire commissioner and his being your brother?"

– A drug program in which addicts see a film and then explain, in front of video cameras, what they saw. The tape is played and they question what they saw. They then tape that playback session and play it back. Insights begin to pile up as the cycle
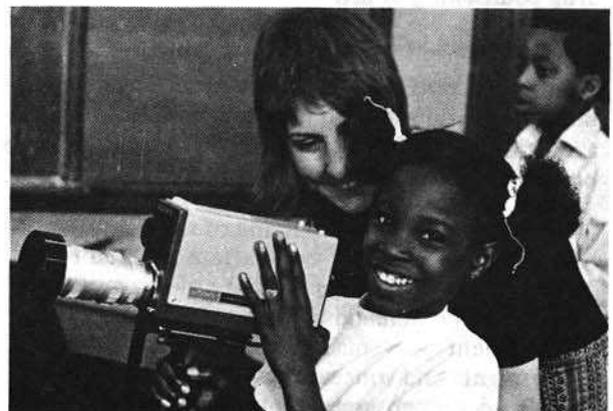
Jon Dunn

continues.

— Young prisoners in both the Young Study Center and Women's House of Detention who have great difficulty talking about their situations and feelings, are taped in role play situations of their own design. Attitudes, feelings, and perceptions come pouring out and, because they are on tape, can be discussed and understood and hopefully transferred to their own lives.

— Tape exchanges are developed to share perceptions: between rival gangs; between prisoners from one neighborhood and the people from that neighborhood; between inner-city and suburban students; between teachers and students in the same classroom; between citizens in remote areas and their legislators.

— Using non-network formats, mixed aged elementary students produce a weekly closed-circuit show about their interests.

— Institutionalized emotionally disturbed adolescent boys write and develop stories for taping. The tapes are used to develop self-concept and inner control.

— First graders role-play and play back so they can see how they appear to others in decision making situations. Then they do the same for the principal.

— Video is used as an evaluation tool with interns of the Parkway Program. Three two minute situations are acted out by a student, a teacher, an intern, who have switched roles, (e.g., a student playing a teacher.) The group then decode the various perceptions, problems, viewpoints, etc. which arose through the taped situations.

— High school students combine a sociology and a community health course by going out to neighborhood facilities, videotaping them, then returning for analysis, argument, etc.

— Staff and students develop games and exercises which metaphorically reveal learning processes and problems.

These few examples only begin to tap the range of possibilities of educating through, with and about video. One truth, at least, comes apparent. What we learn is the "how" we learn. What we legitimize as valid learning processes is what students retain. Even if they never remember the "content," they retain for form. So it seems important not to allow media to harden into a new orthodoxy but to help people to be open to the new tools that are coming at us with increased frequency.
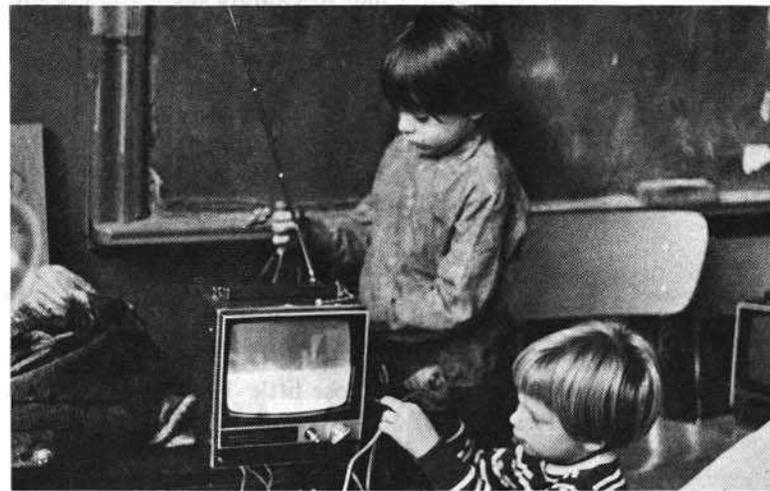
Kids Today: A Cable Project

PAUL RABIN AND MYLES HALSBAND

They peek through the viewfinder of a camera, push buttons in the control room and see themselves on television. They weave, compose songs and pet strange animals; they produce plays; they learn about pantomime.

For the elementary school children of Malden, Massachusetts, it's all part of their school program through field trips to the television studios of Warner Cable of Malden to take part in an experimental television project called Kids Today.

Producer Myles Halsband and Program Director Paul Rabin conceived of the series as an ideal use of a community cable television station by a public school system. Kids Today was designed to make the educational experience of Malden's children an

entertaining as well as informative process, supplementing classroom fare with an entirely new environment replete with people, ideas and experiences that children could not normally receive in a conventional classroom.

Participation is the key — and each program in the series invites the maximum interaction between guest (there is no host) and students. Subjects covered in each episode are often arranged prior to the videotaping by the producer and the classroom teacher; the program itself is telecast on the local community station at a time convenient for parents, teachers, and educators.

Since the show began in February 1972, almost 1300 elementary school students have participated.

Some children on the show have broken eggs, mixed batter, and helped Al-the-Chef cook French toast. Others have sung Woody Guthrie songs with folksinger Bill Staines, learned about clowns, animals, weaving, leathermaking, origami, pantomime and architecture.

Testimonials

Thomas Cosgrove, one of Malden's Assistant Superintendents, has lauded the show for giving students "an insight into what really makes a television program tick." And one of the teachers whose class participated in the show has stated that the program "extends to the community a bond of friendship in a personal sense which they should be unwilling to turn their backs on." The greatest praise for the show has come from students themselves. "Thank you very, very much for inviting me to Cablevision 13," writes third grader Hari Reddy. "I liked it because I like to explore the world around me. I always wished I could go on TV and now my wish came true and you are the one who made it come true." Dougie Ell of the Maplewood School wrote us that he and his classmates "liked the animals and I think that the animals liked us too. Mr. Meyers and Mr. Frochlick we all liked them very much. I think I liked the biggest snake the best."

Jimmy Burns was impressed with another aspect of his Channel 13 experience. "I liked the control room and all those buttons. You sure must have to work hard. I liked those little TV sets too. It must be fun working in the control room and when I grow up I'm going to work in a control room like you."

Myles Halsband

John Le Baron

Studio Tours

According to Producer Halsband, who is a former teacher with expertise in innovative teaching methods, the tour of the studio and control room is as important as the show itself. "What we are doing," he says, "is building visual literacy. For my generation television was a passive experience. We just stared at the tube for hours on end. We'd like to teach today's children how to make shows themselves; they should know how to run cameras, control audio levels and select the proper video source. Television for them will then become a medium of participation and communication rather than one of the first steps in stimulating children to be visually active and literate human beings."

Kids Today is now in its second year of production. Paul Rabin, the station's programming manager, feels that the show is an ideal model for the educational use of cable channels. "This is exactly the kind of cooperative effort we need to encourage," he says. "Parents enjoy the program because it allows them to see their children on TV and to vicariously experience what their children are feeling and thinking."

Teachers and educators feel that the show helps to extend the curriculum and to bring education outside the classroom. Children themselves seem to be watching the show avidly. The cable company welcomes the show because it stimulates more people to subscribe to cable television. Every child who appears on the show probably creates eight or ten viewers including parents, grandparents, friends and relatives.
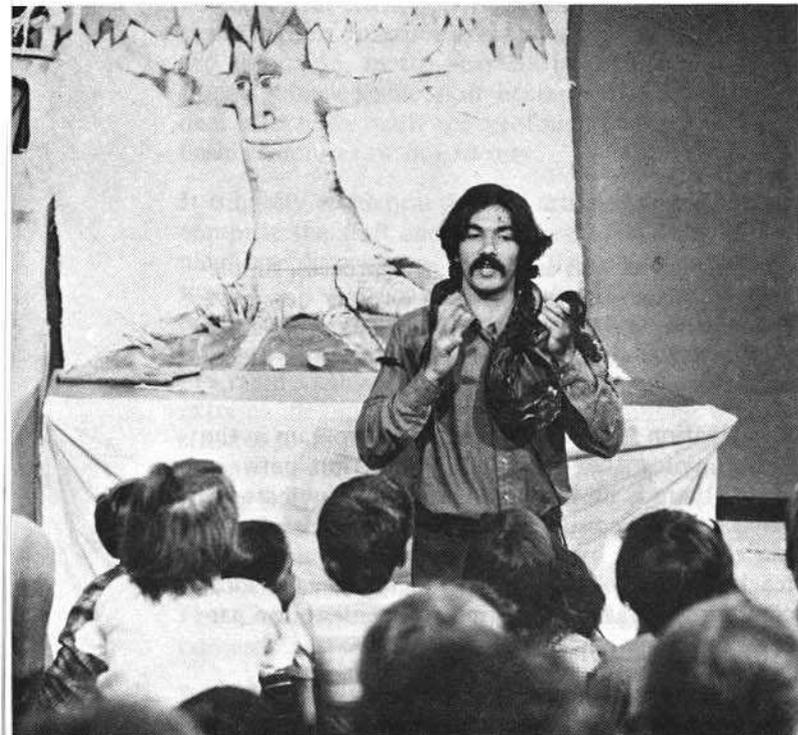
Creating an Elementary School Video Environment

JEFF STRICKLER

Open Channel is an independent, non-profit corporation established to promote the concept of access television and to develop models for community television systems in New York and other communities. In 1972 Open Channel began working in an urban, public, elementary school interested in exploring the uses of ½ inch video. P.S. 145, in upper Manhattan, has a middle and lower middleclass population: two-thirds Spanish; one quarter black; and the rest, white and Oriental. The school's environment is pleasant for teachers and students alike, due largely to the efforts of the principal, and the teachers who are using open classroom and bi-lingual education techniques in their classes.

Funded by a two-year grant from the Edward John Noble Foundation, the program began with using three Sony portapaks in three fourth-grade classes (A, B, and C). A and B are open classrooms with most kids reading on or about grade level. Classroom C is a traditional, teacher-centered class with children who are less self-directed, and who have lower reading scores. The staff for this project included an educational consultant – two days a week, a technical consultant – three days a week, and an on-site trainer – four days a week.

Month By Month

An outline of our activities will give an idea of how this porject progressed.

August - Held two week workshop with four teachers and two paraprofessionals to familiarize them with the equipment.

September-October - began in classrooms -- planned with teachers – met administration and other teachers – introduced video into the classroom – recorded day-to-day activities – encouraged paraprofessional use – began training students – more activities taped by kids – began weekly workshops with teachers and paraprofessionals.

November-December - Groups of four children from Classroom A went outside to make a tape "My Block" – children finished learning how to operate the equipment – teachers taped their classes in action – tapes shown to parents on Open School night, to illustrate how the open classroom works – kids began interviewing in different areas of the classroom – kids went out in groups of four (director, camera, sound, interviewer) to explore the neighborhood around the school and the kinds of jobs people had, using questions posed by the class.

January-February - Class planned four stories as video plays, made costumes and scenery, and did all the production work -- kids planned, researched, illustrated, and produced a videotape about the arts and crafts of the early American settlers (weaving, candlemaking, etc.) – children continued with neighborhood project and showed their tapes to the whole class – work began with the guidance counselor, recording sessions as an evaluative and training tool.

March-April - Kids from A did a study of television commercials aimed at children – commercials recorded from TV – kids visited public hearings on children's commercials – kids made and evaluated their own commercials for fictional products – B children began working in their video corner, with storyboard or comments written for each tape

Jeff Strickler

and class showings for evaluation – C kids taped interview with police regarding incidents of crimes in the neighborhood of the school - tape shown to other classes in the school – C kids made a tape "How to Protect Yourself from Strangers" in Spanish and English – parents helped make a documentary about the school, shown over cable and to Parents Association meeting – concert taped at school by volunteer professionals and shown over cable – trained video helpers for each class to aid other children in setting up equipment.

May-June - Video corners operated in classes A and B -- kids working on their own -- class C continues and finishes tape about the neighborhood -- second concert is taped -- Science Fair taped by girl and crew from class A -- Mr. Peanut athletic context taped by crew from C -- Field Day events taped by crews from A and B -- A kids finish up commercials -- School Art Show and art program at local community center taped by kids B and C -- showed tapes produced during the year to each others' classes -- wrote reports -- stored equipment -- considered following year.

Summarizing A Year

This summary is too brief to include all the complexities each project faced.

Groups working with video were kept small -- usually four children -- so each child would get a turn learning how to operate the equipment. When they came to use the equipment for a project, certain roles had to be established. These roles (camera person, etc.) were chosen by the children or designated by the adult, but they weren't fixed and could be changed to fit a new inspiration. This role structure helped the child focus his attentions and provided a measure of security, clearly defining what was expected of him.

This coming year we plan to continue in several directions: -- classes A, B, and C (now fifth grades with the same teachers) reopen the video corners -- B and C begin with hand puppet shows -- A children make tape about improvement of the school playground -- tapes shown of reading and math labs to parents on Open School night -- will help guidance counselor make tape to explain counseling process - help art teachers edit tapes of last year's Art Show -- two sixth grades begin projects using video -- bi-lingual program make tapes to show parents how to make reading games to play with their children -- begin a video club with new teachers and kids -- set up schedules for equipment to facilitate its movement around the school -- use tape showings at lunchtime -- help teachers use video to evaluate his/her performance in the classroom -- begin cable television showings of tapes produced in the school -- write guide to the various ways video has been used in the school -- have evaluation done of entire program -- train all interested teachers to use the equipment, so that after our two-year involvement in P.S. 145, they will become a faculty with video facility.

We are gradually working ourselves out of a job and that's fine! For video to be viable it must be used internally. It's hard to say where our work has led us. Our final evaluation will tell us that. What we do know is that there has been an impact on the school as indicated by an interest on everyone's part and our feelings of a job well done.

sound effects

DO'S and DON'TS

1. Don't drop or bang the equipment.
2. Keep camera away from the sun or bright lights.
3. Keep everything clean. Don't touch lens glass or recording head.
4. Zip up case before lifting video-tape recorder.

Equipment Rules

1. zOOM in and Focus
2. Hold camera steady
3. Pan SLOWLY
4. Aim microphone at mouth of person who is talking.
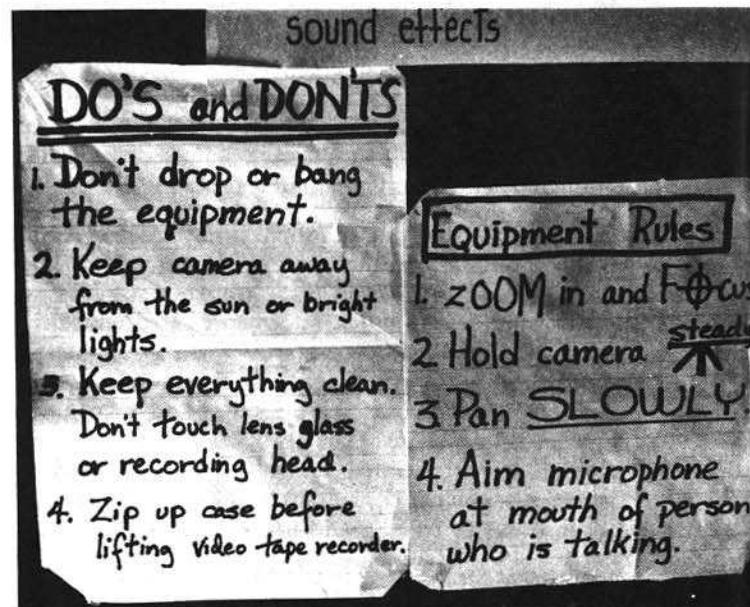
Jeff Strickler

Video and the Public Library

WALTER DALE

The creation of a citizen's video production access center was the Library's entrance into the world of video. The tools and skills of production and distribution were and are provided to the average citizen. Specifically, equipment and its utilization is available to all people of the community, and particularly to those predisposed to use the more traditional print-culture sources of information access.

The original and present thrust of the video program is an exploratory use of half-inch portable video as a tool for citizen information, expression, and dialogue. It has initiated this through an extensive training program of concerned community volunteers. They have become practical users of video. Volunteers have been drawn from a cross-section of the community, ranging in age from 10 year olds to those in their 80's. In socio-economic terms, users have ranged from the less affluent to the very affluent.

In this operational time span, we have seen video become a citizen participatory medium. Over 500 community volunteers have gained "hands-on" vi-

deo skills and knowledge. Citizen's have produced programs exceeding 300 hours of recorded materials. Individual programs of local events and issues have had 250 separate public viewings. Approximately 10,000 people have seen these programs. Tapes reflect the citizens-producers interest.

Areas of Intensive Community Video Utilization

As this completely volunteer program has developed, video users have been working in self-selected interest areas. Although there are others, these areas predominately fall into the following categories: Town of North Hempstead Planning Board; Port Washington Senior Citizens; Sands Point Nursing Home; Educationally Concerned Parents and Teachers; and the Recording of Local History through Events and Personalities. To date, these interest areas are producing discernable results.

These interest areas and results also illustrate the various ways in which video exploration has taken place. They include:

1) Video demythification — Video is a tool with which many people can become adept, not only a selected few.

2) Catalytic agent — Video has been effectively used to engender, to inform discussion and action on local events and issues.

3) Self-image — Video has helped individuals and groups to better understand each other as they are.

4) Personal expression — Video has been the source and means of personal expression.

5) Archival use — Video is providing an on-going oral-visual history of local events, issues, and personalities.

6) Video amplification — Video has presented people without distortion in their natural activities and conversation.

The following two areas of video tape involvement clearly illustrate how citizen production has used video to achieve some of the above video results, as well as community awareness and dialogue use. (These two areas are representative of the dozens that the Port Washington Video Program are involved with. - eds.)

Educationally Concerned Parents and Teachers

Individual housewives and members of various PTA groups have gained instruction in video and consequently become quite adept in its utilization. Their major concern has been the nature and quality of elementary school instruction. They have video taped classes, special events, and innovative instruction. These tapes were made available to parents. For many parents it was the first time they could be seated with their child beside them and see on the screen before them their children and others in a class situation as it happened. This is a novel, innovative and personal experience.

This type of video information has provided many people, for the first time, with a direct sense of what actually is taking place in the educative process of their children. Also, such tapes have provided secondary school students with a knowledge of educational change since their recent days in elementary school.

A major breakthrough in school and community understanding has taken place. With the consent of the individual classroom teacher, members of the community are entering the schools at will to make a record of the activities taking place within the schools. This is a major step in moving from third-hand gossip of what is occuring educationally to an informed understanding.

Ellie Bartow
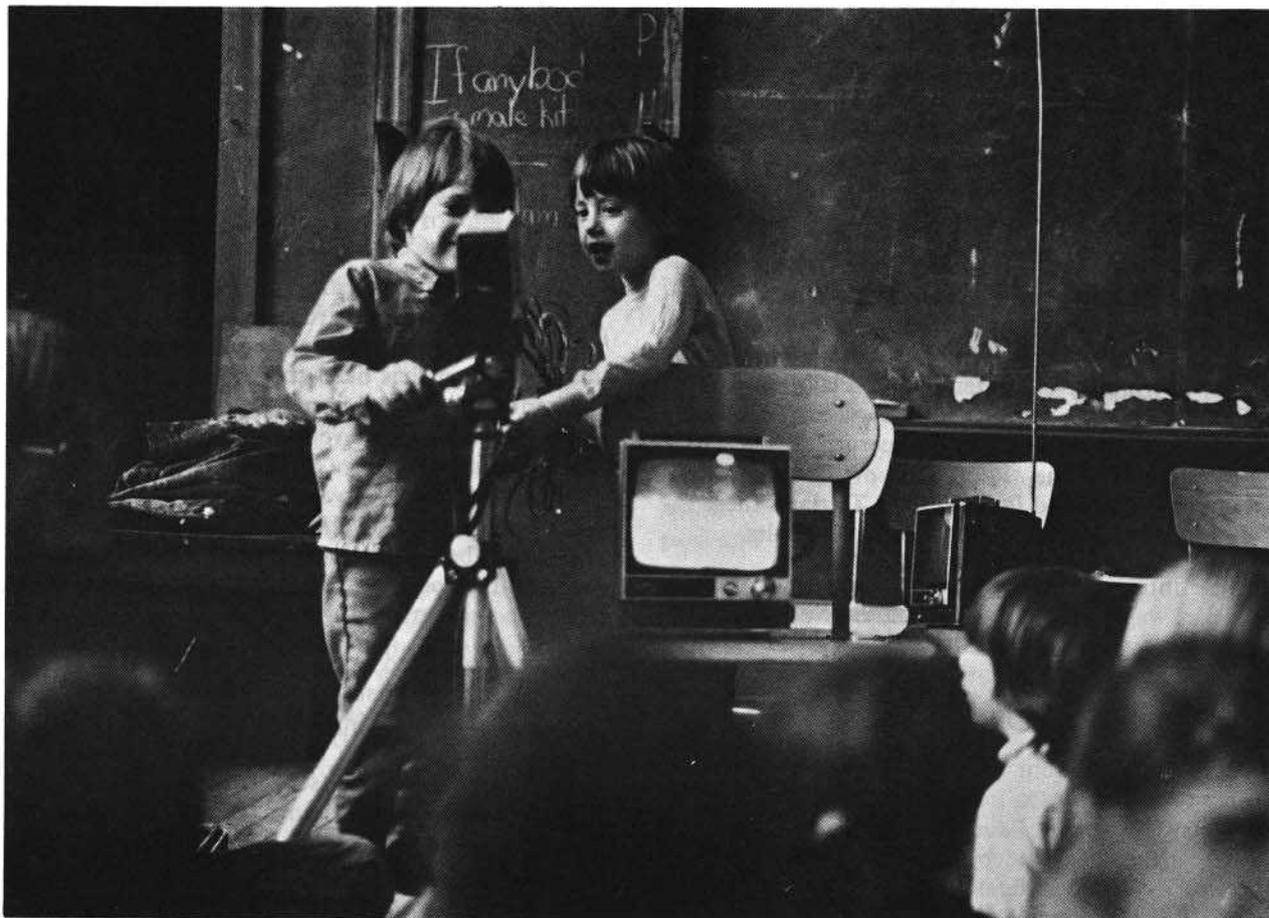
Mary Sheridan

Recording of Local History
Through Events and Personalities

The video program has initiated a series of video-taped interviews with residents of the Port Washington community. This series is known as Port Profiles. Volunteers have acted as interviewers and selected their subjects. Historical information, personal reminiscence, and individual profiles are the general areas of inquiry. These profiles have included long-time residents, newcomers, the well-known personality and the unknown. These tapes have engendered varied responses.

One young person, born and educated in the community, has commented: "After looking at a tape I saw another aspect of this man. He was more than just a local merchant I thought I knew. I saw him in a different light."

Videotaping of issues, events, and activities has been another diverse and rich source for community profiles. The informality of people dealing with ideas, and pursuing their activities has produced candid overviews of the community.

This is only the beginning of gathering a wealth of information for Library Archives. Such video tape probes have helped people to see and understand themselves and others better. Certainly, such an oral-visual history should prove fruitful in the not-so-distant future.

Citizens of the community are becoming increasingly aware of the medium of video tape and its community ramifications. An ever growing number of people are seeing video as a tool for local community utilization.

Video, used in an illuminatory manner can provide amplification of the views of the seemingly less articulate. Individuals in conversation, speaking of their local concerns, can be transported via video into a formal setting where normally their informal articulate quality would be lost.

We have seen video become a means in which local organizations could better understand themselves. It also has been the medium in which organizations can provide others with some indication of their purpose. Video has provided an informal excursion into the activities of many people, perhaps a greater understanding and respect for the difference and similarities among people of this diverse community.

Community groups have made extensive use of video as a catalyst. Individuals and organizations have found that informal video taping of people in relaxed situations which are then played back to a more formal group will elicit more open response. Such tapes become true discussion and action stimuli. Over 74 Port Washington organizations have utilized video as a source of information, as a catalyst, or as a means to provide others with knowledge of their activities and views.

Contributors

MITCH ACKERMAN - received an M.A. from the University of Maryland in Radio/TV/Film - founding member and president of Video Connexions in Buffalo and has held video workshops for children in Columbia, Md. - now in the process of looking for work.

CHUCK ANDERSON - teaches high school in Long Island, N.Y. and author of The Electric Journalist (Praeger, 1973) - adjunct faculty of the Center for Understanding Media - conducted video workshops at the New School for Social Research, Hofstra University, Stony Brook University and the National Conference on Visual Literacy - latest new book called, Video Power: Grassroots TV, will be published by Praeger in 1974.

BOB BEHR - teaches English at the Mill Creek School in Philadelphia where he works with adolescents in the psychiatric division of the Institute of the Pennsylvania Hospital.

QUINCY BENT - teacher for the past five years - responsible for co-producing the pilot program for ZOOM at WGBH in Boston - former Assistant Director of the Children's Video Museum - Director of the New England Communication Center for Developmental Disabilities in Waltham, Mass.

JEFF BUSH - graduate assistant for video programs in the Thematic Studies Department of John Jay College, in New York - currently working on a series of studies on the interaction between dance and video.

BRUCE COST - began working with kids when he received a social service grant from his employer, The Xerox Corporation - currently the Media Coordinator of a program in video, film, photography and journalism at Holy Cross School in Rhinebeck, New York.

MAGGI COWLAN - a member of the staff of the Center for Understanding Media where she works on various projects.

WALTER DALE - working in Fairfield, Maine with his own production group - former director of the Port Washington, N.Y. Public Library Video Program - consultant for over 300 video organizations - currently developing a Maine Video Access Coalition.

JON DUNN - director of the Communications Experience in Philadelphia - director of the related Arts Institute of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania - Associate Professor of Film Arts at Moravia College - served as artist-in-residence in Alaska through the Center for Understanding Media.

DAN EDELMAN - video technician for the Center for Understanding Media - responsible for cover photography and printing of photographs in this issue.

IRVING FALK - most recent book, The War of Ideas (with George Gordon) - a radio and television writer for many years - executive producer/director of the award winning radio programs The Urban League Presents and By the Year 2000 - professor of Communications in the School of the Arts at New York University.

JANE GARMEY - project coordinator for the Thematic Studies Program at John Jay College in New York - coordinates and directs all field work and off-campus placements.

LARRY GOLDIN - formerly teacher and counselor in vocational rehabilitational programs in Alaska - discovered by Jon Dunn of the Communications Experience and kidnapped to Philadelphia, where he has been teaching film and video to kids in the inner city - again looking for work in Alaska.

GEORGE GORDON - author of numerous books on persuasion and communications, most notably, Persuasion: The Theory and Practice of Manipulative Communications (Hastings House, 1971) - consultant to various government and private intercul-

tural agencies, both in the United States and in Europe - presently, Chairman of the Department of Communications at Hofstra University in New York - most recent book: The War of Ideas (with Irving Falk).

MYLES HALSBAND - program producer with Warner Cable in eastern Massachusetts - has taught on all levels with particular interest in free schools and open education.

PETER HARATONIK - coordinator of the Artist-in-the-Schools Program at the Center for Understanding Media - educational coordinator of the Center's M.A. program in Media Studies - formerly a New York City school teacher and VISTA volunteer.

DAVE JONASSEN - doctoral candidate in Educational Media at Temple University, conducting dissertation in video - educational media consultant for Pilot V, an educational television project for migrant children, based in Newfield, New Jersey.

JIM KEARNEY - now working for a film distribution company - previously been involved in teaching at Great Neck High School (1971-72) - has written for the journal "Communications on Alternatives" - free-lance consultant on education and media.

GERRY LAYBOURNE - festival Coordinator for the American Film Festival of the Educational Film Library Association - formerly, teacher at Concord Academy in Concord, Massachusetts, where she was involved in exploring the uses of video in the elementary school open classroom.

KIT LAYBOURNE - director of research and publications at the Center for Understanding Media - editor of DOING THE MEDIA (1972, C.U.M.) - has taught in the Philadelphia Public Schools and at Concord Academy in Massachusetts - gradute instructor of courses with the New School for Social Research and the Center for Understanding Media.

JOHN LE BARON - on the Faculty of Education at York University in Toronto - former director of the Children's Video Theater at the University of Massachusetts which involved elementary students whose tapes were cable-cast over local outlets - work has been reported on in numerous articles.

PHILLIP LOPATE - artist/writer-in-residence at P.S. 75 in New York City, working with Teachers and Writers Collaborative - author of a book of poetry, The Eyes Don't Always Want to Stay Open - at work on a book about education to be released by Doubleday.

BARBARA LUDLUM - staff member of the Center for Understanding Media since it began - production manager on the Center's book, DOING THE MEDIA - assistant to the producer in the Center's film series.

TERI MACK - the director of the Young Filmmakers Foundation Video Rivington Program - now a video specialist with the Teachers and Writers Collaborative and an artist-in-residence at P.S. 75,

New York - teacher of video for the Center for Understanding Media.

ELLEN MILES - producer at WNVT, an ETV station in Annandale, Virginia - worked with the Los Angeles Times, First Tuesday, NBC Reports and with David Brinkley - former teacher - has also done free-lance writing and reporting.

ANNE PAGE - member of the Communications Experience in Philadelphia for the last two years - currently thinking about moving to San Francisco or Seattle and working with kids there.

JOE PETNER - presently working on his doctorate in Teacher Education - a resource colleague in North Dakota with "Project Follow-Through," a federally funded program for children who are past the Headstart age groups - previously taught in Philadelphia elementary school.

PAUL RABIN - program manager of Warner Cable of eastern Massachusetts - worked in film and instructional television and taught in Chelmsford, Massachusetts before joining Warner two years ago.

SUSAN SHERWOOD - second grade teacher in Fort Yates, North Dakota, working with Joe Petner on Project Follow-Through.

JEFF STRICKLER - taught filmmaking to high school seniors in New Jersey and through a special program, for the U.S.I.A. in the Mid-East and South Asia - has also been a consultant to the American Film Institute - in the past year has been working with video and high school and elementary school students in New York through Open Channel.

ALDO TAMBELLINI - an independent film and video artist of international stature, began working with kids in Yonkers, New York in 1969, under program sponsored by the State's Division of Humanities in Albany - subsequently worked with children in Harlem from 1970 through 1972.

About This Issue

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