

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