

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-



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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