

### 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 discussed by all.

### Teaching Suggestions

At first there may be some frustration among the entire class as they watch these long interviews. Di-

rect 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.

## Creative Electrography

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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.

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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

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store on the block, goods on display 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 particular 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.