

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