

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



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