

Creating an Elementary School Video Environment

JEFF STRICKLER

Open Channel is an independent, non-profit corporation established to promote the concept of access television and to develop models for community television systems in New York and other communities. In 1972 Open Channel began working in an urban, public, elementary school interested in exploring the uses of ½ inch video. P.S. 145, in upper Manhattan, has a middle and lower middleclass population: two-thirds Spanish; one quarter black; and the rest, white and Oriental. The school's environment is pleasant for teachers and students alike, due largely to the efforts of the principal, and the teachers who are using open classroom and bi-lingual education techniques in their classes.

Funded by a two-year grant from the Edward John Noble Foundation, the program began with using three Sony portapak in three fourth-grade classes (A, B, and C). A and B are open classrooms with most kids reading on or about grade level. Classroom C is a traditional, teacher-centered class with children who are less self-directed, and who have lower reading scores. The staff for this project included an educational consultant – two days a week, a technical consultant – three days a week, and an on-site trainer – four days a week.

Month By Month

An outline of our activities will give an idea of how this project progressed.

August - Held two week workshop with four teachers and two paraprofessionals to familiarize them with the equipment.

September-October - began in classrooms – planned with teachers – met administration and other teachers – introduced video into the classroom – recorded day-to-day activities – encouraged paraprofessional use – began training students – more activities taped by kids – began weekly workshops with teachers and paraprofessionals.

November-December - Groups of four children from Classroom A went outside to make a tape "My Block" – children finished learning how to operate the equipment – teachers taped their classes in action – tapes shown to parents on Open School night, to illustrate how the open classroom works – kids began interviewing in different areas of the classroom – kids went out in groups of four (director, camera, sound, interviewer) to explore the neighborhood around the school and the kinds of

jobs people had, using questions posed by the class.

January-February - Class planned four stories as video plays, made costumes and scenery, and did all the production work – kids planned, researched, illustrated, and produced a videotape about the arts and crafts of the early American settlers (weaving, candlemaking, etc.) – children continued with neighborhood project and showed their tapes to the whole class – work began with the guidance counselor, recording sessions as an evaluative and training tool.

March-April - Kids from A did a study of television commercials aimed at children – commercials recorded from TV – kids visited public hearings on children's commercials – kids made and evaluated their own commercials for fictional products – B children began working in their video corner, with storyboard or comments written for each tape



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and class showings for evaluation – C kids taped interview with police regarding incidents of crimes in the neighborhood of the school - tape shown to other classes in the school – C kids made a tape "How to Protect Yourself from Strangers" in Spanish and English – parents helped make a documentary about the school, shown over cable and to Parents Association meeting – concert taped at school by volunteer professionals and shown over cable – trained video helpers for each class to aid other children in setting up equipment.

May-June - Video corners operated in classes A and B - kids working on their own - class C continues and finishes tape about the neighborhood - second concert is taped - Science Fair taped by girl and crew from class A - Mr. Peanut athletic context taped by crew from C - Field Day events taped by crews from A and B - A kids finish up commercials - School Art Show and art program at local community center taped by kids B and C - showed tapes produced during the year to each others' classes - wrote reports - stored equipment - considered following year.

Summarizing A Year

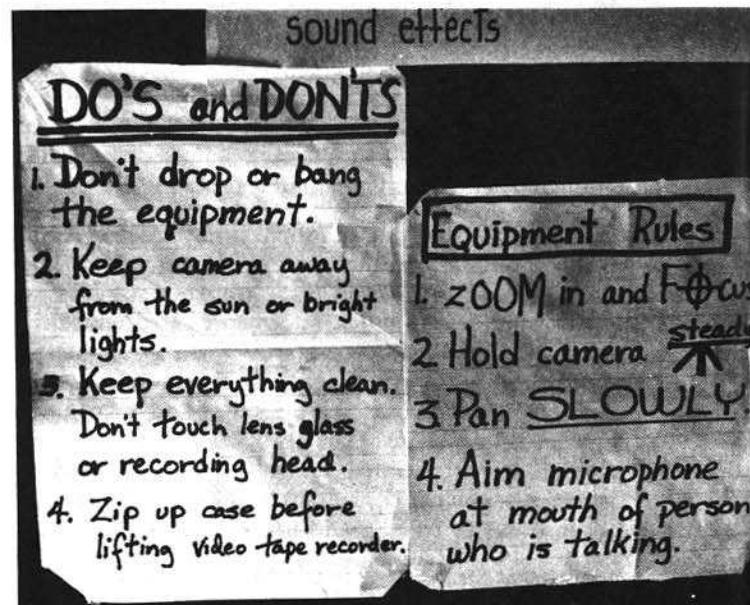
This summary is too brief to include all the complexities each project faced.

Groups working with video were kept small - usually four children - so each child would get a turn learning how to operate the equipment. When they came to use the equipment for a project, certain roles had to be established. These roles (camera person, etc.) were chosen by the children or designated by the adult, but they weren't fixed and could be changed to fit a new inspiration. This role structure helped the child focus his attentions and provided a measure of security, clearly defining what was expected of him.

This coming year we plan to continue in several directions: - classes A, B, and C (now fifth grades with the same teachers) reopen the video corners - B and C begin with hand puppet shows - A children make tape about improvement of the school playground - tapes shown of reading and math labs to parents on Open School night - will help guidance counselor make tape to explain counseling process - help art teachers edit tapes of last year's Art Show - two sixth grades begin projects using video - bi-lingual program make tapes to show parents how to make reading games to play with their children - begin a video club with new teachers and

kids - set up schedules for equipment to facilitate its movement around the school - use tape showings at lunchtime - help teachers use video to evaluate his/her performance in the classroom - begin cable television showings of tapes produced in the school - write guide to the various ways video has been used in the school - have evaluation done of entire program - train all interested teachers to use the equipment, so that after our two-year involvement in P.S. 145, they will become a faculty with video facility.

We are gradually working ourselves out of a job and that's fine! For video to be viable it must be used internally. It's hard to say where our work has led us. Our final evaluation will tell us that. What we do know is that there has been an impact on the school as indicated by an interest on everyone's part and our feelings of a job well done.



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Video and the Public Library

WALTER DALE

The creation of a citizen's video production access center was the Library's entrance into the world of video. The tools and skills of production and distribution were and are provided to the average citizen. Specifically, equipment and its utilization is available to all people of the community, and particularly to those predisposed to use the more traditional print-culture sources of information access.

The original and present thrust of the video program is an exploratory use of half-inch portable video as a tool for citizen information, expression,

and dialogue. It has initiated this through an extensive training program of concerned community volunteers. They have become practical users of video. Volunteers have been drawn from a cross-section of the community, ranging in age from 10 year olds to those in their 80's. In socio-economic terms, users have ranged from the less affluent to the very affluent.

In this operational time span, we have seen video become a citizen participatory medium. Over 500 community volunteers have gained "hands-on" vi-