

**“Give Me Space!”**

**Situated Video Production And High School Social Relations**

by

Lara Margaret Beaty

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology  
as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2005

©2005

Lara Margaret Beaty

All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the  
Graduate Faculty in Psychology in satisfaction of the  
dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

\_\_\_\_\_ Joseph Glick \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Chair of Examining Committee

\_\_\_\_\_ Joseph Glick \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Executive Officer

David Chapin

Colette Daiute

Roger Hart

Anna Stetsenko

Supervisory Committee

**Abstract**

“GIVE ME SPACE!”

SITUATED VIDEO PRODUCTION AND HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL RELATIONS

by

Lara Margaret Beaty

Adviser: Professor Joseph Glick

Video production programs from three high schools are investigated to explore how the social and material contexts influence video production activity. Video cameras are examined as tools that mediate social relations. The methods include an ethnography of three courses from each of the three schools and a new use of student-made videos to display student activity. The schools are referred to as Suburban, Urban, and Boarding Highs and are diverse in terms of their populations, program orientations, and resources. *Student-school relationships* are defined in terms of program structure, school environments, and student participation. Substantial and persistent differences between schools are discussed. The criteria for assessing development in video communication are proposed and applied to the work of three groups of students. A range of characteristics are considered to allow for the diversity of production activity: The clarity of a message, coherence, agency, technological proficiency, aesthetics, and self-expression. The relations between these qualities emerged as meaningful

criteria. A new analysis of student-school relationships is then pursued with an examination of the choices students made during video production. At a microanalytic level, the choices of location, placement within those locations, and camera techniques are investigated, and their implications are discussed in reference to a selection of projects. Student development is considered in terms of the student-school relationships as revealed in their video work. Student-made video projects are found to yield information about student-school relations that is consistent with observations but more detailed and student specific. These details and the broader observations reveal a dynamic and meaningful relationship between contexts and students at all levels of activity. The implications for video production courses and education more generally are discussed. A DVD is included that contains an electronic version of this document in “html” and “pdf” formats as well as student-made videos in Quicktime format and still images, which are in color, in Portable Network Graphics files.

Dedicated to Nikos, Eirene, and Stella  
and to the memory of Jocelyn Solis

## Acknowledgments

Many have contributed directly or indirectly to the completion of this dissertation. My first acknowledgment needs to be of the students and teachers who tolerated my presence day after day and who thus allowed me a glimpse into their worlds. I would also like to thank Ted Fisher and Georg Burwick of the Digital Studio at the UCR/California Museum of Photography and Nikolaos Apostolakis for helping me acquire the technical skills I needed to edit videos and create the electronic version of this document.

Many individuals at the Graduate Center and beyond had an impact I can only begin to acknowledge. Of my fellow students, I would particularly like to thank Eduardo Vianna and Jocelyn Solis for their consistent support and stimulation: Eduardo explored numerous ideas with me as well as helping with some practical matters along the way, and Jocelyn—among other things—read and commented on my first “serious” paragraphs. I regret she was not here to see me finish. Other students I would like to thank include Beiye Gu, Nina Patti-Slota, Dusana Podlucka, Caren Rawlins, and Michaela Rome. Judith Kubran, Maria Helena Reis, and the whole Solis family as well as my own family were instrumental and warrant my gratitude. I would also like to thank all the professors who promoted my development. In particular I am grateful to Michelle Fine, Cindi Katz, and Katherine Nelson from the Graduate Center and Mary

Gauvain, Ricki Goldman-Segall, and Jay Lemke from elsewhere for key conversations and assistance at different points in my work.

My greatest gratitude goes to my supervisory committee who took the time to work with me. Colette Daiute and Roger Hart contributed substantially at both ends of my work. Anna Stetsenko and David Chapin provided their insights and support throughout this project and truly deserve my gratitude. Last but certainly not least, I would like to thank Joseph Glick who has pushed me since my first days at the Graduate Center to always think a little further than was comfortable and for providing me with frequent opportunities and support to find my way through.

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iv
Acknowledgments.....	vii
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Video, Schools, And Research.....	2
Video Cameras In Schools.....	2
Video As Methodology.....	6
A Cultural-Historical Approach to Education.....	10
Material Environments In Social Relations.....	26
Objectives And Organization.....	32
<b>Chapter 2: Ethnographies of Video Production .....</b>	<b>36</b>
Methods Of Entry And Observation.....	37
The Selection Process.....	37
Gaining Entry.....	38
Description Of The Ethnography.....	42
Description Of The Ethnography.....	42
Researcher Participation, Conversations, and Formal Interviews.....	45
Other Sources Of Information.....	50
Video Production, Schools, And Courses From A Distance.....	51
Neighborhoods, Campuses, And Names.....	58
Official School Statistics And Stories.....	68
Program Affiliations And Official Ideologies.....	75

Material Environments And Resources.....	80
Production Equipment.....	84
<b>Framing Social Relations .....</b>	<b>90</b>
Establishing A Place Within Schools.....	91
Connections And Their Absences In The Classrooms.....	99
Equipment Access As Definitive Characteristic.....	110
<b>Course Ideologies, Class Activities, And The Material World.....</b>	<b>115</b>
Setting A Tone.....	116
The Presence Of Bodies In Campuses.....	120
Potential Messages.....	123
Affordances For Video Production.....	127
Participation Of Production Equipment As Mediated By Programs.....	130
<b>Chapter 3: Video Projects and Their Students.....</b>	<b>134</b>
Program Ideologies In Action.....	135
Assignments And Preparation .....	135
Finished Projects And Their Topics.....	142
Official And Unofficial Evaluations.....	146
Student Trajectories.....	152
The Ownership Of Projects And The Meaning of Collaboration.....	152
Ethnicity, Class, And Gender In Participation.....	162
Motives And Un-motives In Resistance And Cooperation.....	169
<b>In Search Of Development In Video Production.....</b>	<b>182</b>

Unedited Versus Edited Video And The Production Process.....	186
The Production Process.....	186
The Clarity Of A Message.....	192
Coherence.....	197
Agency And The Location Of Meaning.....	198
Agency In Camera Operation .....	205
Postproduction Agency.....	208
Technological Proficiency.....	209
Aesthetics.....	211
Self-Expression.....	213
Changes In Video Production Activity And Development.....	214
Cases of Questionable Development.....	215
Development In Urban High's "Sex Talk".....	216
Development At Boarding High With Wicket And Jerome.....	222
Development In Suburban High's "The Good, The Bad, And The Techies".....	226
<b>Chapter 4: Mediation by the Material.....</b>	<b>231</b>
To Transcribe or Not To Transcribe.....	232
Location, Location, Location!.....	234
The Meaning Of Bounded Areas.....	242
Classrooms.....	244
Hallways And The Grounds.....	248
Doorways, .....	252

Windows, And Other Borders.....	252
Video Graffiti.....	256
Participation Styles And The Further Definition of Places.....	261
Extending De Certeau.....	264
Cases Of Changing Student-School Relations.....	278
Social Relations In Urban High’s “Sex Talk” .....	279
Social Relations In Suburban High’s “The Good, The Bad, and the Techies”.....	289
Social Relations At Boarding High With Wicket and Jerome.....	301
<b>Chapter 5: Conclusions?.....</b>	<b>317</b>
The Meaning Of Video Production.....	318
Evaluation Of A Methodology.....	322
The Affordances Of Contexts As Active Participants.....	325
Space And Video Production.....	332
<b>Appendix A: Video Assignments by Course.....</b>	<b>339</b>
<b>Appendix B: Focal Students and Focal Projects.....</b>	<b>344</b>
The Students.....	344
The Videos.....	346
<b>Appendix C: Simple Maps of Campuses And Classrooms.....</b>	<b>351</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>354</b>

### Index of Tables

Table 1: Observation Schedule.....	45
Table 2: Summary of Official School Statistics .....	70
Table 3: Summary of Program Qualities.....	90
Table 4: Numbers of Video Projects Observed and Obtained by Course.....	141
Table 5: Summary of “Space” In Student Activity In Each Program.....	150
Table 6: Number of Edited and (Unedited) Video Projects by Genre With Distinct Tactics for Broadening Assignment Constraints.....	173
Table 7: Number of Edited and (Unedited) Video Projects by Course With Distinct Tactics for Broadening Constraints.....	174
Table 8: Summary of Production Activity and Indications of Development.....	212
Table 9: Camera Operator Actions According to the Strategic/Tactical Dichotomy.....	266
Table 10: Camera Operator Actions According to Potential Strategic or Tactical Effect.....	268
Table 11: Camera Operator Actions According to the Level of Solidarity Expressed.....	273

### Illustration Index

Illustration 1: Stills From Student Projects That Show Campuses.....	61
Illustration 2: Still Images From Shots That Show “Hallways” .....	63
Illustration 3: Still Images Of The Campus At Boarding High.....	67
Illustration 4: Boarding High’s Student-Made Murals.....	115
Illustration 5: Tiffany and Rachel in Their “Public Service Announcement” About Safe Sex, Project 12, present a format more similar to a classroom talk.....	199
Illustration 6: Examples of Shots With Aesthetic Value.....	209
Illustration 7: In Project 8, Skinny shows with a movement of his arm that he is “downtown” but nothing shows his location.....	217
Illustration 8: Still Shots from Project 8, Segment 86, Showing Skinny’s Position During Classroom Interviews.....	243
Illustration 9: Stills From Jerome’s Day 1, Shot 1, Project 15, in which the mural becomes a defining point for Wicket’s identity.....	247
Illustration 10: Still Shots from Urban High Drunk Driving PSA, Project 9, showing different positions for recording a car’s driver.....	251
Illustration 11: Still Shots from Suburban High Drunk Driving Commercial, Project 4, showing different positions for recording a car’s driver.....	252
Illustration 12: Boarding High Video Graffiti from Project 15.....	253
Illustration 13: Stills From Wicket’s Day 1, Shot 3, of a poster that was transformed.....	255
Illustration 14: Strategic Displays.....	265
Illustration 15: Tactical Uses.....	265
Illustration 16: Stills of Skinny, Ed, and Abbey During Interviews and Off-Task Shots that demonstrate differences in shot closeness....	279

Illustration 17: The Only Extreme Close-up Shot Taken of Rosemary During Off-Task Activity at Urban High.....	281
Illustration 18: Still of Skinny asking Lynn to answer a few questions in Interview 1.....	282
Illustration 19: Still Shot of camera operator waiting for student to ready herself for Interview 23.....	283
Illustration 20: Still Shots from Interview 2 that demonstrate the interviewer's and camera operator's cooperation with the interviewee's assertiveness.....	284
Illustration 21: Still Shot from Interview 21 in which Skinny lowers himself to mediate height differences.....	285
Illustration 22: Still Shots From Luke's Project, Shot 31, With Strategic Display.....	290
Illustration 23: Shots of the Teacher, which are routinely taken from far away.....	292
Illustration 24: The Only Shots From Project 5 That Contain Close-ups.....	293
Illustration 25: The Difference in the Position of the Anchor Desk.....	294
Illustration 26: The Interview From Shot 36 in which the interviewees decided on the topics .....	295
Illustration 27: Stills From Shot 2, Showing Luke's Most Subjective Camera Work.....	296
Illustration 28: A student offers a comment about being non-white and describes his Mexican music.....	297
Illustration 29: Still Shots From Jerome's Shot 13 From Day 1 that demonstrate a shift between the worlds without and with authorities .....	300
Illustration 30: Still From Jerome's Day 1, Shot 14 showing increasing distance and a use of the structure.....	302

Illustration 31: Stills From Jerome's Shot 15 in which Jerome acts strategically by defining the event, limiting people's participation, and teasing students .....303

Illustration 32: Stills of Event From Wicket's Shot 6 of Day 1 in which sudden shifts demonstrate changing positions and relative intimacy.....305

Illustration 33: Stills From Various Shots That Demonstrate Serious Interest.....307

Illustration 34: Stills from each of the 4 shots in the edited project, showing a concern with authority.....309

Illustration 35: Stills From Wicket's Day 2, Shot 1 of a student running from security.....311

## Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation studies three high school video production programs, exploring the unique contexts of each and the ways student activity is engaged with the social and material environments. The use of “space” in the title signifies a process that is theorized to contribute to student development, a process which stirs questions about ways to conduct video programs and school more generally. *Space* is central because it has both concrete and metaphorical meanings: *Space* is concretely found in the undefined areas between places that students frequently used in video work. It is also that *space* within theoretical *zones* that provide the freedom necessary for development to occur. *Space* is used throughout this document in a specific and atypical sense and should not be confused with how it is used elsewhere. It is used to indicate an absence—an empty area. It is used to indicate those actual and metaphorical openings into which students can explore and assert personal agendas.

Student video production uniquely reveals aspects of how development occurs and how the meanings of different contexts are part of the activity that potentially promote development. This dissertation marks the beginning of establishing methods that are anticipated to provide rich details about learning, development, and social relations. The methodological approach uses affordances of video production courses that are available in no other type of course. The courses themselves are relatively new to high school, and their introduction reflects diverse conceptions about school reform. The activities of video production generally afford opportunities for students to pursue new activities in their uses of video cameras, which have implications for both research and

education. The underlying questions of how much *space* and what types of *zones* facilitate learning and development give focus to an exploration of what it means to produce videos in high school.

### **Video, Schools, And Research**

This dissertation began as an investigation of how video cameras—through the manipulation and reflection of material environments—mediate social relations in high schools, but in the course of observations, the question of how the program contexts mediate video production became increasingly salient. Therefore, the purpose is to explore three diverse programs in video production to reveal the connections between developmental and social processes as the meaning of production is defined, contested, and reinterpreted. The study of contexts and the reasons for selecting video production programs is, however, heavily influenced by a particular perspective. This perspective concerns foremost the nature of a video camera and the role it plays in schools and research. Therefore, this section describes some meanings associated with video production. The following section then turns to broader theoretical considerations.

#### **Video Cameras In Schools**

Video cameras and the courses that utilize them embody histories and ideologies that structure activity. The specific technology built into a camera as well as the

manner in which they are made available are meaningful. The next chapter will consider the specifics of the camera—which features it offers and their affordances—and more about the forces behind the movement to bring video production to schools. A suggestion, however, of how such an artifact may influence particular contexts is contained in the following:

Artifacts are never “culturally neutral” and researchers should not view them as “fixed entities” that can simply be inserted into different cultural contexts which are then treated as independent variables. Instead, artifacts are catalysts of new kinds of human interactions—many of which cannot be predicted ahead of time.

(Bransford, 2003, p. 81)

Video cameras contain the ideologies of their makers and purchasers, and though they confront the particulars of each school, cameras *promote* changes.

Video cameras, it was found, are increasingly brought into the institution of school in response to three movements—three potential revolutions for school systems. First, there is the much talked about *digital revolution* that it is hoped will effect meaningful changes in schools. A need is perceived to incorporate *new media* in public school curriculums. An essential part of this, which drives the creation of courses, is the emphasis on *technology*. “The word *technology*, a familiar term in anthropology, where it may refer to anything from language to an arrow to an atomic bomb, is most used in current popular press and educational

circles to refer to computer related endeavors” (Hammond, 2003, p. 27). Video is normally edited on computers and therefore seems to be frequently worked into this broader movement; editing video is a more meaningful use of computers than most classroom uses and one that Apple Computer, Inc., has specifically promoted (see [www.apple.com/education](http://www.apple.com/education) for details). Cameras that are digital or that can easily be connected to computers are less expensive and so more widely available than ever.

Video also represents another technology that has long been pervasive in popular culture and that has been used in schools with questionable success: television. The digital revolution has provided a new tool with which to invoke uses of media. Video production involves youth with a medium they are well acquainted with but as a creator as opposed to a passive consumer, which in turn is anticipated to promote media literacy. The rationale is that society and individuals are expected to benefit from a more media savvy population (Galican, 2004). Thus the second possible revolution is one of genuinely inspiring *critical literacy* in a media saturated world (Goodman, 2003). Video production is therefore frequently seen as a revolutionary tool with which educators can achieve old goals.

The third possible revolution was an unexpected discovery of the pilot data (Beatty, 1998) for this project and relates to its methodological uses: Cameras have the ability to alter social relations, particularly in the ways power is distributed,

suggesting the possibility of a more democratic or, more properly, anarchic education. “Importing an artifact often involves importing cultural values and practices afforded by the artifact” (Lin & Schwartz, 2003, p. 10), and video production comes with practices that do not fit easily with common school practices. The most basic change is that students cannot create videos while sitting quietly at their desks. Other project-based or inquiry-based curricula provoke similar changes, which are then adapted to or adapted for, but video production is unique in the need for extensive physical movement.

While reporting on a similar “freedom,” that of working on the internet, Schofield and Davidson noted “that teachers commonly express concern about the possible negative consequences of student autonomy on the Internet and implemented procedures designed to control and circumscribe students’ online activities” (2003, p. 66). On the internet, a concern was about students navigating to *virtual* places that might be deemed inappropriate. With video production, students need a greater freedom to move to different *real* places, provoking similar teacher concerns. Their responses vary widely.

Students also respond differently to the affordances of the camera. They have the opportunity to ask questions, direct activity, travel, and rearrange furniture—all ways of potentially gaining a significant power through their association with the camera and project. The use of these affordances take different forms and can take unexpected directions: “Even though the design of a

new tool is originally embedded in a particular practice, it is often used in other contexts, sometimes in ways, which its designers never imagined” (Lin & Hatano, 2003, p. 4). The unanticipated activities that emerged include teasing fellow students, gaining entrance to places that were usually off-limits, and challenging the authority of school staff in different ways. This power of the camera to reflect and change normal ways of relating make it a valuable tool for changing schools and conducting research. “Since people's use of technology reflects choices and therefore values, people's patterns of adaptation, resistance, and transformation within the possibilities they encounter, are indicators of cultural development” (Hammond, 2003, p. 27). Changes can equally indicate individual development.

### **Video As Methodology**

An essential component of this dissertation is the development of a new analytical tool in the use of student-made videos. The need for new research tools that meet changing needs are frequently discussed. Eisenhart, for instance, has written about the array of actions already taken to extend existing research methods. “Yet, important aspects of contemporary life—struggles within groups, movements of people across time and space, internet communications, extralocal networks, consumerism, and the mass media—can be addressed only superficially even with these additional methods” (2001, p. 19). The analysis described in Chapter 4 is the beginning an effort to pursue the issues that are increasingly at

the focus of educational research. Directions for improving on the methodology are considered in Chapter 5.

The choice of student-made video as the tool of choice is, however, not novel. When “rethink[ing]” her own research, Hammond indicated a movement “toward media-based research” (2003, p. 40), and Goldman-Segal (1998) is a pioneer in video-ethnography for studying education, but informant-made videos (or films) have rarely been used since Worth and Adair (1972) first sought culture in them. Worth and Adair taught Navajo informants how to use movie cameras, which were the contemporary technology, primarily because a lot was already known about the Navajo and they seemed a good test case of what might be learned about culture when the informants have had little exposure to movies and television (p. 27). The study, however, was not replicated, and Worth (1981) backed away from asserting a strong resemblance between language and film<sup>1</sup>. It is in how Bellman and Jules-Rosette (1977) built on their approach that is taken up in this research.

Bellman and Jules-Rosette used film and video with the Kpelle in Africa and stressed a different aspect of their informant’s work. They compared their use to photographic elicitation (1977, p. 15), a method of using photographs to stimulate an informant’s conceptions of what is portrayed. With video, however, informants can demonstrate attitudes and concepts in how they use the camera

---

1 His death in 1977 ended his use of the method. The 1981 book in which he wrote about the differences between language and film consisted of work collected after his death.

that they may not entirely be aware of or that would be less likely or more difficult to talk about. Photographic elicitation draws forth comments that might not arise in a standard interview because it provides people with something to relate to, but by putting people behind the camera, their relationships with what is in front of the camera are displayed in real time, their expectations can become visible in their efforts to anticipate events, their immediate reactions to events can become displayed, and they have the opportunity to narrate or converse with other participants. They can additionally be asked to comment on the recordings they have made.

The information provided by having the informant behind the camera is based on the following, often overlooked, assertions:

No matter how “disinterested” the observer filmmaker or videoist is in the events taking place, he [or she] perceives them from an intentional perspective located in the “here and now” of the recording situation. . . . Not only do some elements in the setting change to accommodate the presence of the camera, but the camera operator throughout the process of filming or taping makes definitive choices of what to shoot, when to turn the camera on and off, and where to use zoom, pan, dolly, crane, and follow shots. These decisions, whether they are made for aesthetic considerations

or to posit a particular feature of the setting, are intentional choices.

(Bellman & Jules-Rosette, 1977, p. 3)

The choices made by the camera operator and the immediate responses to the operator's actions are thus available for infinite—in real time, slowed down, sped up, or frozen—viewings.

As data, informant-made videos have three significant advantages: First, individual positions—both material and metaphorical—are uniquely demonstrated by informant actions and the reactions they provoke. This provides the opportunity to view social relations in great detail. Second, the video is available for numerous viewings by diverse audiences. The analysis can be shared in detail, evaluated, and extended. The availability of the data allows interpretations to be dissected, making disagreements and efforts for consensus more meaningful. Lastly, the data includes images and audio and the informant's engagement with both. The material environment is thus made particularly salient by the nature of video production, and student productions reflect its meanings and the ways in which cameras can be used within the context.

The contribution of a detailed visual realm to the study of social relations should not be underestimated. Images provide concrete data, the meaning of which may remain contested but for which patterns can be sought to resolve disputes that seem unresolvable in the study of speech. It is the ability of “images [to] not only carry information in the constant battle over meaning but . . . to

mediate power relations” (Fischman, 2001, p. 31). Informant-made videos display the material positions of participants, which are theorized to reflect and shape relations through qualities such as distance and height (Hodge and Kress, 1988). The camera operator’s affordances to choose positions is central to the microanalysis. Power is rarely spoken about concretely or consciously acted upon, but it’s role can be revealed in semiotically rich informant-made videos. A wealth of new information becomes available that is untouched in standard discourse analyses or video recordings.

### **A Cultural-Historical Approach to Education**

My perspective on development and education is based largely on what Cole (1996) refers to as “Cultural Historical Activity Theory” (CHAT). An essential premise of this approach is to view development as inseparable from the contexts in which it occurs (Gauvain, 2001). In this section, a CHAT perspective is discussed and extended with work that examines additional aspects of social relations. Note that terms used to facilitate the discussion serve as markers, linking fluid processes between people and artifacts. Diverse concepts are engaged to reveal often neglected elements of social relations.

A CHAT perspective on education is based in the work of Lev Vygotsky (Cole, 1996; Valsiner, 1997), and the following excerpt introduces central concepts:

An essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his [or her] environment and in cooperation with his [or her] peers. Once the processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement. From this point of view, learning is not development; however, properly organized learning results in mental development and sets in motion a variety of developmental processes that would be impossible apart from learning. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90).

The idea that “learning leads development” (Holzman, 1997) is central to CHAT, and the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD) is a major device used to explain school activity. It offers a basic paradigm for the role of instructors and instruction.

The ZPD, however, is not the focus of this project: The instruction-related interactions between teachers and students—theoretically where the ZPD would

be located—is not studied<sup>2</sup>. *Internalization*, despite problems with the term (Packer, 1993), is used to indicate the process by which *learning* can bring about *development*. Genuine internalization is recognized as having taken place when a student comes to “own” the new material (concepts, theories, technologies, etc). Chaiklin (2003) raises concerns about what Vygotsky intended by the term *development*, but it is here recognized as having occurred when mediated activity (Wertsch, 1985) begins to be initiated by the person in question and used with personal intent. Development is understood as becoming visible when a tool (such as a video camera but elsewhere discussed in terms of a child’s use of language) is used to structure an activity in a way that is new to that individual.

The process of internalization and subsequent externalization is an essentially social process. It always retains some elements of the contexts in which activity has been experienced and relates to the contexts in which it later emerges. Though not obviously related, an irregularity in the connection between learning and development is recognized: “Development in children never follows school learning the way a shadow follows the object that casts it. In actuality, there are highly complex dynamic relations between developmental and learning processes that cannot be encompassed by an unchanging hypothetical formulation” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 91). The problem of explaining the dynamics of these relations has not been resolved. The quality of social relations—the nature of

---

2 Interactions that could be distinguished as creating a ZPD were actually rare during observation.

relations between a student and school—are viewed as necessarily a part of the dynamics of internalization.

Note that the notion of individuality—of what it means to be an individual student—differs from common uses: “The boundary between individual (i.e., intramental) and group (i.e., intermental) mental processes is often more difficult to maintain than we tend to assume in the discourse of Western psychology” (Wertsch, Tulviste, & Hagstrom, 1993, p. 340). There is a constant dialogue between individuals and contexts that is maintained during internalization. Individuals, therefore, cannot meaningfully be studied apart from the social and material contexts in which they act. Nevertheless, individuals have unique positions and bring unique histories to a shared context. Everyday uses of language as well as some theoretical positions tend to emphasize the uniqueness and lose the social embeddedness of student activity. This dissertation attempts to maintain a tension between individual positions and social contexts.

My purpose is to use this theoretical tension to illuminate actual, frequently sub-textual, tensions in classroom activity. Litowitz argues that there are:

two elements missing from discussions of the zone of proximal development and the learning theory based on internalization: identification and resistance. What motivates the children to master

tasks is not the mastery itself but the desire to be the adult and/or to be the one the adult wants her or him to be. (1997, p. 475)

Inversely, failures to “master” a task may often have to do with resistance to being that type of person.

Throughout a student’s life, influential adults express a variety of values about what is and is not worth doing, and students learn these values and who they belong to. It is not only the adult who teaches the student in a given context, therefore, that students may identify with or resist; it is an abstract notion of the teacher as the owner of ideologies. Ideologies, in this sense, refers to the abstract version of the world as it *should* be (Hodge and Kress, 1988, p. 3). School activities as they are supposed to occur are then “owned” by a system—a system of which teachers are the most visible representations yet to which they are ultimately subservient. A student’s relationship with school is therefore a dynamic entity that involves teachers, other students, other staff, programs, subjects, and histories, as well as some abstract sense of school. This *student-school relationship* is put forth to address individual positions within the institution of school. In this way, a student adopting a “mastery orientation” is viewed as making the decision to belong to that part of that system.

The key is that wanting to participate in learning activities seems to have a great deal to do with how students see themselves, how they want others to see them, and whom they see meaningfully engaging in related activities. As Litowitz

wrote, “Mastering activities and establishing a sense of oneself are not two distinct lines of development but are, rather, entwined in complex ways—so that one cannot ‘study’ one without the other” (1993, p. 184).

The student-school relationship is, therefore, partially about defining which motives are engaged. Checking off a list of observed motives, however, will not reveal the relationship’s dialogic nature. Motives must be contextualized to be meaningful (Hickey, 2003, p. 409). The task, then, in understanding a particular school context is to define the values inherent in it—the *place*—as they interact with the values brought by the individuals who participate in activities located there.

Hickey (2003) argues that motivation is about *engaged participation*. Engaged participation, however, is only one option for students: The students who do not visibly participate in classroom activity or who participate mostly by disrupting academic activity—in short, those who are un-engaged—are nevertheless engaged in a student-school relationship. And like Litowitz who stresses identity and resistance, Hickey writes that “Engaged participation is about negotiating one’s identity with different and potentially conflicting and competing communities of practice” (p. 412). *Resistance*, from this perspective, arises when the dominant community conflicts with the one to which a student is identifying. Hickey describes further how this perspective shapes theory and research:

Viewing motivation as engaged participation in knowledge practices places the burden for motivating engagement on those practices rather than on the environment (in a mechanistic, behaviorist view) or on individuals (as in a contextualist, rationalist view). In other words, if the “community” in a classroom does not value participation in knowledge practices associated with the intended curriculum, it will be difficult for any individual to participate in those practices (2003, p. 411).

The environment and the individual are thus relevant in how students participate in ongoing activities.

Valsiner (1997) extends the notion of ZPDs to include the context as an active part of development. His two zones exemplify the similarity between concrete and metaphorical *spaces*. The “zones of free movement” (ZFM) and “zones of promoted action” (ZPA) describe the two ways in which learning activity involves more than teacher-student interactions. The ZFM embodies the constraints and resulting affordances within the context: Movement within the zone is without restriction, but movement is bounded by both the sharp and “fuzzy” borders that contain it. “The ZFM structures (a) the child’s access to different areas in the environment, (b) the availability of different objects within an accessible area, and (c) the child’s ways of acting with the available objects in the accessible area” (p. 188). Within this zone, activity is free, but movement

outside it—whether it is a physical area or a bounded activity—is not permitted. Class requirements and assignments create ZFMs by defining acceptable activity. The area within ZFMs is the *space* students have to initiate, choose, and explore. The constraints on student freedom determine how much *space* is available.

The ZPA, on the other hand, focuses on how particular activity is *promoted* along certain lines and is indicated by people’s expectations. Activity is promoted through discussion, in the tools made available to students, and by example. An assignment to read a particular passage from the textbook is understood as creating a ZFM, but a ZPA is contained in the text’s content. For example, particular uses of a video camera are promoted by the textbook’s position on proper usage, in the features built into the camera, and with the accessories available for use. Most often, Valsiner argues, the zones occur together—some activity being prevented while other activity is encouraged. According to Valsiner, education is necessarily about preventing students from participating in some forms of activity and has increasingly become about promoting “goal-directed” behavior (p. 195). ZPAs limit movement within the available *space* but only to the extent that students are unaware of other options.

Each zone has a place in education, influencing activity in unique ways: The ZFM defines what affordances are available while the ZPA describes which affordances are illuminated by demonstration, speech, or other action. An underlying question concerns whether there are developmental consequences of

using one of these zones more than the other; it is a question about what consequences may result from differences in the available *space*. This dissertation studies the contexts of three high school video programs in terms of how they constrain (ZFM) and promote (ZPA) activities. The *space* in student-school relationships is thus found by defining what is promoted and forbidden. Students, however, bring unique histories to the relationship that engage dynamically with the school's context so that these influences are non-determinate.

The peculiarities of student-school relationships can be expected to be stronger and more influential for adolescents than for children. "Students who have worked in school for 5, 8, or 10 years have very well grounded beliefs about what people do in school" (Lee, 2003, p. 47). High school students have a substantial history with school, *and* they will soon have a significant change in societal status; they will soon be (some legally are) adults. Adolescent students are "engaged in the process of forging individual identities" and can easily come to resent the constraints imposed by school (Schofield & Davidson. 2003, p. 76). Therefore, the constraints that are apparently a necessity of educational pursuits may at times be an obstacle. Even when an activity is consistent with a student's identity, the compliance required to participate *correctly* may lead to resistance.

Thus the role of power, which is asserted most directly in constraint, deserves further attention:

Vygotsky. . . . focus[ed] too exclusively upon the *facilitation* of skills and abilities that took place in the ZOPED [or ZPD]. He often omitted its negative aspect—both the censuring and “extinction” of behaviors irrelevant to the learning task and the shaping and inculcation of only those skills and actions “fit” for the social position the neophyte was accorded. . . . We miss the elements of power, status, stratification, and ownership . . . (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998, p. 176)

Power in education is an important part of understanding activity in high school and its meaning for students.

Power is expressed in school rules, aims, and agendas that do not necessarily include the perspectives of its students. These are at times in explicit opposition to the students’ ways of thinking. This set of contrasting perspectives is explicit in Hodge and Kress’s “ideological complexes,” defined as:

a functionally related set of contradictory versions of the world, coercively imposed by one social group on another on behalf of its own distinctive interests or subversively offered by another social group in attempts at resistance in its own interests. . . . It is the actual opposition of interests which creates the necessity for contradiction within the complex. . . . Ideological complexes are constructed in order to constrain [and promote] behavior by

structuring the versions of reality on which social action is based”

(1988, p. 3).

The school’s ideologies are (ordinarily) the dominant ones, having an *official* status, and students are put in a position to accept or resist them.

Discussed in this way, student-school relationships seem necessarily oppositional; there is an aspect of colonization that is exaggerated when the students have a minority status. But the more antagonistic aspects are not the only ones. After all, teachers, as well as parents, tend to have some noble reasons for establishing ZFMs and ZPAs. *Official ideologies* exist for a reason.

Diamondstone (2002) “refer[s] to *resistance* . . . as a misreading of dominant discourse, arising from sociocultural perspectives and purposes that have been marginalized. . . . [And resistance] must be recognized as . . . resourceful ” (p. 3).

Resistance in these terms is about an inability as much as an unwillingness to adopt official ideologies, and it is only through the little, daily acts of resistance that an awareness of differing perspectives becomes possible. Diamondstone continues, “Negation affords an opportunity to learn, to do otherwise; it opens a gap in the world as is, a space for a subject to perform, to do something, to speak” (2002, p. 7). Similarly Butler (1997) argues that consciousness comes about only through a resistance to the universal subjugation of children. Litowitz also stresses the *necessity* of resistance: “The desire to move beyond participation to

responsibility is in itself an act of resistance, a resistance to being dependent and controlled by another” (1997, p. 482).

To some degree, then, all engaged participation by students can be considered resistant. By choosing to act (or not to act), a student renders the teacher less necessary. De Certeau’s (1984) distinction between *strategies* and *tactics* are fundamental for this research because of the spotlight it places on resistance and the role of power in everyday activity. Accordingly, a *strategy* is activity from a position of power, and it is associated with the designation and ownership of places. Power arises in defining what is appropriate behavior within a particular *place*, a term which is used in this dissertation to distinguish a location that has semiotic value. A place is “borrowed” when one aligns oneself with the activity structure of the place. A *tactic*, on the other hand, is activity from a position of weakness and is associated with time in that a tactic must take advantage of moments in time to either use the structure to achieve alternate ends or to subvert the meaning of a context entirely. Note that de Certeau argued that “consumers” are increasingly left only with tactics because “the system in which they move about is too vast to be able to fix them in one place, but too constraining for them ever to be able to escape from it” (p. 40). Therefore, teachers as well as students lack significant power and are only able to act strategically when they embody the institution that is the true power in education.

In line with de Certeau, activity is assumed to serve individual purposes even when it serves institutional ones. De Certeau's division of acts into strategies and tactics opens the door for viewing cooperation as similar to resistance. As Diamondstone described one event, a student "asserted her own agenda but concealed her resistance behind a cooperative façade" (2002, p. 14). Though usually not so apparent, *playing along* can enable students to realize their own agendas, and these agendas may have nothing to do with the task students are engaged with. Knowing *what* motivates a student in any given moment is impossible, probably even for that student, but the occurrence of an action nevertheless affects the actor's position within that context: It can be "read" as benefiting the actor.

The *choices* students make in how to participate, therefore, are central to this project but should not be understood as a return to traditional individualism (Stetsenko & Arievitch, 2004). The agency represented in such a choice is rarely calculated or made in isolation; it is a product of the context, particularly when it is tactical. As Diamondstone describes it,

The idea that individuals act in their own interests through operations half out of awareness implies a view of agency that is embedded in cultural settings, realized not in deliberative acts but in the fleeting response to unpredictable conditions of the moment (2002, p. 10).

As she describes it, a choice is an assertion of agency that “is embedded in collective activity, embodied in a collective subject” (Diamondstone, 2002, p. 5).

The difference between tactics that are resistant and those that are cooperative is, however, significant; the significance is illuminated by the addition of a second dimension. Hodge and Kress (1988) proposed that relationships are routinely defined along two dimensions: *power* and *solidarity*. “Solidarity is an effect of power just as power is an effect of solidarity” (p. 39). To be in a position of power, one needs the cooperation of the less powerful to maintain and further the dominant ideologies. There must be some alignment—some shared sense of purpose, some positive affiliation—for leaders to lead. On the other hand, when conflict arises, regardless of the relative power, there is a distinct lack of solidarity. Solidarity defines group membership regardless of the status within the group and therefore reflects identity.

The criteria for investigating student-school relationships thus arise from both power and solidarity. Schools, being in the position of power, always act strategically through their various representatives, but they can communicate high and low levels of solidarity. At the extremes, schools can only constrain students when solidarity is low, but as solidarity increases, promotion increasingly becomes possible. Students, on the other hand, can be in both positions of power or weakness, though power is never truly owned. Students can thus act in more or less strategic ways, keeping in mind that at their most strategic their acts maintain

some tactical qualities. Students can constrain and promote activity when they act strategically. More often, though, student activity is clearly tactical in nature. As such, cooperation represents the highest levels of solidarity, while resistance communicates the least solidarity. These criteria facilitate comparisons between schools and across the different levels of activity that are studied.

When considering power and solidarity, the process of internalization needs to be reconsidered: The possibility of learning and whether or not learning promotes development are influenced by the nature of social relations; the questions concern how and to what extent. General problems with the concept of *internalization* have already resulted in a number of interpretations and substitute terms, frequently to avoid the loss of the dialogic nature of the process, but Smith (1996) distinguished two basic approaches: “transmission models,” in which the material that is internalized resembles the original, and “transformation models,” in which the resemblance can be minimal. Transformation models explicitly recognize the potential of a problematic relationship between teachers and students. The introduction of power and solidarity to the discussion raises the possibility that the process of internalization may vary according to the relations the student has with the teacher and the material being learned. When problems do not entirely prevent engagement, it may be found that the processes of learning and development vary as some students obligingly adopt the values as well as the concepts a teacher presents and other students resist at every

opportunity. Perhaps acknowledging the difference and valuing both routes would lead to greater success in promoting more development, but thus far little is known about the consequences.

Within high school video production, there is, however, a more basic question: What is development in video production? Recognizing some sort of progress that can be conceived as development is particularly difficult when programs approach the subject in radically different ways. An exploration of development in video production is therefore rooted in the comparison of “video communication” with speech. Bakhtin (1986) described speech acts as being fundamentally constrained by the available speech genres, and thus development is equated with the use of genres:

The better our command of [speech] genres, the more freely we employ them, the more fully and clearly we reveal our own individuality in them (where this is possible and necessary), the more flexibly and precisely we reflect the unrepeatable situation of communication—in a word, the more perfectly we implement our free speech plan. (p. 80)

Video genres are therefore viewed as the fundamental constraint with which students must work, and the most *developed* communication is that in which a genre is employed to most fully indicate what is intended and, when appropriate, to communicate an idiosyncratic message. *Personalization* and, even more so,

*intentionality* thus demonstrate a degree of internalization of the *means* for video communication such that the techniques for recording and editing video truly become tools for achieving one's purposes.

### **Material Environments In Social Relations**

One aspect of the CHAT perspective that is unevenly appreciated but specifically explored in this research is the role of the material environment in mediating activity. Vygotsky took an explicitly materialist position. *Tools* or artifacts are central to CHAT in terms of how they influence development. "Cultural artifacts were central to Vygotsky's conceptualization not only because they could be the media of consciousness, of 'higher mental functions,' but because, as such, they could serve as tools of liberation from control by environmental stimuli" (Holland et al, 1998, p. 62). The mastery of tools, then, liberates people from material domination. The problem is that some artifacts are highlighted—being distinguished as tools—while others are ignored. All parts of the material environment potentially participate—becoming cognitive tools.

As a *participant* that is often overlooked, buildings and the artifacts they contain carry their own histories and assert their own ideologies—their own constraints and promotions—at a variety of levels. At their most basic, artifacts have particular *affordances* (Gibson, 1986) that limit what can be done and promote some actions. Latour (1996) further indicated the environment's

participation in introducing the concept of “framed interactions.” Accordingly, all interactions are *framed* by the material environment; activity is shaped by its material frame.

Furthermore, Latour (1996) stressed that artifacts have the ability to bring the actions of distant people into the immediate interaction, thus connecting macro and micro social relations.

The clothing that we are wearing comes from elsewhere and was manufactured a long time ago; the words we use were not formed for this occasion; the walls we have been leaning on were designed by an architect for a client, and constructed by workers—people who are absent today, although their action continues to make itself felt. (p . 231)

Distant actions are embodied and therefore participate in the immediate ones. In schools, the furniture that establishes seating and work patterns was chosen with some idea of how classes function, and the video equipment was selected with a particular idea of what was needed. Even posters on the walls maintain the presence of other activities and the ideologies behind them. Artifacts thus maintain the connection to the world outside the immediate context. They further maintain a stability over time because most materials do not frequently change.

The material world is thus thoroughly connected with the social world. Latour (1996) insisted that humans and objects are equally part of the activity,

irreplaceable and inseparable in the act. Both are actors, and both are actants:

“There are only actors—actants—any one of which can only ‘proceed to action’ by association with others who may surprise or exceed him/her/it” (p. 237). Activity thus requires bodies and tools and the agency that brings them together.

Simultaneously, walls help form the contexts that frame activities, even if they are not explicitly activated. Finally, the *official* affordances—those purposes that history has overtly inscribed in an object—can be exceeded to fulfill previously unobserved potentials. This last is an essential component of this perspective: The material world does not determine action, but the range of choices is constrained by it and some choices are so implicitly and explicitly promoted that the usual range of actions observed is far less than those possible.

The ways in which the material environment asserts its presence has been elaborated upon by Lefebvre (1974), who offered three distinct levels of meaning. The methodology being developed in this research is anticipated to provide ways to further investigate the coordination between the three levels, but for the present, they offer a deeper consideration of how environments participate in activities. The first level of influence is referred to as “spatial practice;” it is what is prescribed to happen in a place. In schools, classrooms have different functions: The chemistry lab can be used for other things, but many chemistry experiments could not be completed without the equipment installed in the room. This level

relates to the *official* affordances and is defined by how a place is visibly and routinely used. This level can easily be observed.

The “representations of space” or how the space<sup>3</sup> is openly understood is the second level Lefebvre (1974) described. This is the level occupied by dominant ideologies. For example, the math classroom may not be any different from the English classroom, but the fact that everyone refers to them by these names changes the meanings of the rooms. Lefebvre argued that an ideology needs a place that describes it, that has its vocabulary connected to it, and that embodies it (p. 44). This need for material representation demonstrates one difficulty subordinate ideologies confront within institutions when they are allotted no place. This level can be observed most easily in the labels that are visually (such as with signs) and orally used to describe an area—thus creating a *place*.

The final level is what Lefebvre referred to as “representational space,” referring to the symbols and hidden meanings inherent in a place. This level has a special significance and is the one that is the focus of the new methodology. “Representational space is alive; it speaks. It has an affective kernel or centre. . . . It embraces the loci of passion, of action and of lived situations, and thus immediately implies time” (p. 42). *Representational space* is either personal or belongs to a subordinate group that in some way obscures these meanings. In its connection to time, it is the level that relates to *tactics* or activity from a position

---

3 Lefebvre’s use of the word “space” is distinct from my use.

of weakness: This level of meaning is not permanently or openly marked but occupies a place only when particular people also occupy the place. In many ways, this level is the most powerful because it is the level people are least aware of and ironically most in control of; it is the level at which students and teachers might most differ. This level of meaning is more difficult to observe but can become visible in student made videotapes—in the way they relate to places with the camera. All levels, however, are at work and communicate the messages of ideological complexes. Lefebvre referred to them as “the triad of the perceived, the conceived, and the lived” (p. 39).

The need to devote more attention to the material environment is dual: At a theoretical level, it provides a connection between particular moments in particular contexts and societal actions, and at a very practical level, the significance is typically underestimated and insufficiently understood. The *zone* concept in the ZPD, ZFM, and ZPA is a spatial metaphor that at times is clearly material. With toddlers, for instance, parents limit their children’s movement quite directly to prevent a whole range of accidents, and the toys provided promote activities parents find valuable. Zones are similarly but more subtly framed with older children and youth.

Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, and Tejada (1999) have contributed to the ZPD the notion of a *third space*. They argue that the *third space* is where the language of the teachers and the language of the students merge to create hybrid

languages, which are found to facilitate development. The *third space* is similar to my conception of *space* because it is a place where the teacher's agendas do not dominate and students have the freedom to introduce their own languages and interests. One underlying question about the utility of *space* for promoting development asks whether a material *third space*—viewed as that *space* between *places*—might also promote development in video communication and perhaps in other subjects. In work with elementary school children, Rivlin and Wolfe found that “children often took their work with them into these private places [the wardrobe, the bathroom, the reading area, and under the table], where they could write or study without being watched” (1985, p. 191). The “privacy” sought out by these and other students may allow the process of internalization. The possibility of having the teacher enter these *spaces* stirs a separate but compelling question.

At the most practical level, it is possible that the messages embodied in schools will “have a particular objective validity and will be the least likely to be reflected upon and recognized as being matters of custom and value rather than nature” (Goodnow, 1990, p. 282). The danger (and possible advantage) of the messages conveyed materially is that not only will students perceive them as the way things must be, but teachers will also: What happened “at a particular point in time” will continue to limit what students and teachers believe is possible (Spain, 1992, p. 6). Knowledge of which aspects of school environments are most

crucial to improving education can be a guide to how communities should best use insufficient funds. The material environments of schools, which shape first impressions and daily activity, are investigated broadly to help define school differences and similarities. The material is then included in the study of moment-to-moment actions as both a concrete measure of action and a participant in activity. Student-made videos are pursued as a way to reveal meanings that may otherwise remain hidden.

### **Objectives And Organization**

This chapter has briefly outlined a perspective, offering connections between different levels and different aspects of activity. The specific objectives of this dissertation are multiple and complexly related, though they are united in the effort to connect developmental and social processes in situated video activity. Their relationship is aptly described by the metaphor Awiakta (1993) used to describe the composition of her book: “a round, doublewoven basket.” Theory and data, in my case, “[weave] around four themes, gradually assuming a double-sided pattern—one outer, one inner—distinct yet interconnected in a whole” (p. 34). She describes the four ribs of a basket woven together and then turned in so that the outside seamlessly becomes the inside. This metaphor serves to describe the composition of this document because of the way that theory is folded into the

situated activities of high school students and because the purposes or “themes” are connected, not in the abstract, but in the context of video production, weaving them together into a whole. The purposes pertain to exploring (1) the contexts of three high school video production programs, (2) the role of the material in creating contexts, (3) the complexity of development in student video communication, and (4) novel methods for investigating social relations and development. These purposes build and depend on one another. The dynamic and non-determinate relationship between these themes is sought, as the tools of inquiry—video cameras—become a particularly salient part of the material world in these contexts, serving to reflect ideologies, development, and sharp details of diverse schools.

With this in mind, Chapter 2 focuses on the general contexts that connect the diverse classroom activities of each program and the characteristics that distinguish them. It is an examination of what is relatively permanent in the programs and therefore focuses on the longest timescale (Lemke, 2001). The context and methods of research is described in this chapter. Then the broader context of video production, the schools, and the programs are discussed. Because this chapter focuses on the schools and programs and the entities that embody power, the *constraints* and *promotions* of the programs are the focus.

Chapter 3 examines smaller units of activity by examining what observation revealed about classroom activities, the specific constraints and

promotions that influenced them, and the indications of development within student activity, including their videos. This includes a description of the videos that were observed and obtained for analysis, a description of the constraints and promotions on student production activity, and general student trajectories. One case from each school is explored in detail.

Chapter 4 studies the smallest units of activity: It pursues different layers of a microanalysis with the goal of advancing an approach for examining microgenetic processes, though its application is thus far incomplete. Student-made videos are the primary data, and question of how students “use” the institutions (de Certeau, 1986) is central. First, the decision to not fully transcribe video is discussed. Then changes in locations and the meaning of selected locations are explored. A way to more deeply analyze student actions based on an extension of de Certeau’s “strategies” and “tactics” is proposed, and one case from each school is explored in detail and a connection to “development” within these is tentatively made.

In Chapter 5, an effort is made to reintegrate the different portions of this dissertation and specify future directions for research. The conclusion discusses an evaluation of the programs in terms of what students do, an evaluation of the new methods employed and their further advancement, the participation of the context in video production (and all educational activities), a consideration of

*space* in education, and the potential for video production to improve upon social relations.

## **Chapter 2: Ethnographies of Video Production**

The essential purpose of doing an ethnography of the participating high school courses was originally to sketch the context in which video projects were created for a fuller understanding of how students worked and as an alternate source in evaluating a novel methodology. In the process, however, it became evident that the ethnographies revealed differences between programs that would tell unique stories of technology use and of environmental participation. Additionally, I found surprisingly little written despite the growing numbers of courses. Thus the stories of the programs threatened to eclipse the quieter stories of the videos and demanded to be elevated to at least an equal topic of discussion. In addition to serving as a contextualization of the project, the ethnography has become a study in itself. I have given particular attention to the material environments of these courses, employing procedures that are consistent with grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

This chapter describes the ethnographies of nine video production courses in three public high schools. Three schools were selected to illuminate similarities as well as differences; with only two, the differences would have dominated. Three courses at each were observed because the contexts facilitated this decision, which complimented the original decision for three schools.<sup>4</sup> The first section will

---

<sup>4</sup> Specifically, there were three teachers at one school, the three classes were back to back in another, and at the third school, the opportunity existed within the time of the study.

describe the methods. The second will discuss the major constraints and promotions of each program. An analysis of social relations and how they are part of the educational process are then described, before finally discussing how material environments shape and reflect program activities.

### **Methods Of Entry And Observation**

#### **The Selection Process**

The story begins with how the schools were “selected” for study, which was complicated by several issues. Video programs needed to be in a high school and to allow students to choose production locations within the school, rather than being studio-only courses. Diversity in the type of video program and in the student populations were the only objectives beyond this minimum requirement. The goal was to see how video production proceeds rather than to find the best programs or programs that actively sought a reform of the social structure of schools. While the research was initially planned for New York City, the location was changed to southern California. On both coasts, however, phone calls were rarely returned, and the busy schedules of teachers and administrators limited discussion. But every contact yielded some information about the general “culture” of high school video production, and some specifics about a few school and regional characteristics were revealed.

Potential schools were first sought on the internet. The rationale for this, besides the fact that an enormous amount of information about public schools is now available this way, is that in the digital era there is an implicit connection between video production and the internet. The connection is a more tenuous one than expected, but this will be more fully discussed in the next section. Additional schools were suggested by people who were contacted this way, and one of the focal schools was included because a digital media organization, which was contacted for technical information, planned to conduct a course there. In all, 34 schools with video programs were identified, 11 of which were in New York. Of the 23 schools in California, letters were sent to 19, phone contact was made with 10, 3 were deemed too far away, 2 had inappropriate programs for inclusion, 2 teachers and 1 principal did not want to participate, and in 5 schools, repeated attempts and messages never led to discussion with the appropriate person. The search stopped when three diverse schools were found to have willing instructors and principals and programs that met the minimum requirement of involving high school students in video production with some freedom to move around the school during production.

### **Gaining Entry**

Getting permission to conduct research in the three chosen programs began with the teachers. The school referred to as Suburban High was the first to be

confirmed.<sup>5</sup> The teacher quickly gave his permission after a brief meeting before school started. Official permissions were necessary from the school district and involved the submission of a written proposal. The man responsible for permissions, with whom I had several phone conversations, requested greater specification regarding the short interview, and a month into the term, I was granted permission to conduct my study. I never met with the principal.

The opposite pattern proceeded in the second school. The school referred to as Urban High was in the Los Angeles, where the proposals are submitted electronically. No personal contact was made at the district level, and permission was granted without any additional communications. The principal, however, met with me and the teacher whom I first contacted. The principal was new to his position and, having just received his Ph.D., wanted to support research. He had few concerns, and the meeting started late and was interrupted more than once with school business. He was quickly satisfied.

The third school, referred to as Boarding High, presented more of a problem. At every level, the staff seemed uncertain how to handle my request to conduct research. The school is under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs but has a great deal of independence, and the video program was being conducted by a museum outreach program, funded through a not-for-profit granting organization, and led by university art students, thus everyone I spoke

---

5 The meaning of school pseudonyms will be discussed in the following section.

with had to consult someone else. First, the classroom teacher was concerned about my intentions: She did not want someone to come in to study “Indians,” in part because the cultures of her students were quite diverse, some coming from reservations and others coming from urban centers and knowing nothing of Native culture. She also expressed a vague concern about protecting them from exploitation. This concern was expressed again by the school and the funding agency when they realized I wanted to copy student work. Emails and discussions with two representatives from the funding organization, face to face discussions with teacher, additional documentation for the school, and finally the final permissions were given. All that remained were parental and student permissions.

I presented my project in a simple and condensed format to the classes I studied. With the exception of the advanced class at Suburban High, I asked for students to volunteer to allow me to copy their video work and consent to an interview at the end of the program. Multiple requests, reminders, mailings, and specific requests to the partners of existing volunteers resulted in 41 volunteers. At Urban High, one teacher offered extra credit to students who brought back their consent forms, regardless of whether they chose to participate or not, and my offer of pizza as a thank you to one class was turned into the reward for returning consent forms, which I did not enforce. Because the students at Boarding High did not have easy access to their parents, letters were mailed and permissions received via self-addressed, stamped envelopes. This amazingly

resulted in only one missing parental consent form. All students were given the option, but only one student requested that her image be blurred before being included in analysis. Everyone appearing in the videos from whom consent was not obtained has had their images blurred in the focal videos. Pseudonyms are used for all participants to protect their privacy.

The process of seeking schools, permissions, and volunteers revealed three differences worth noting. First, New York City presented more obstacles to research than did Los Angeles and nearby communities: The New York City public school administration requires, when last explored, that researchers be fingerprinted. No formal checks of my identity were made in connection to my research in California. In New York, one school principal declined to participate due to some previous bad press, and such sentiments and distrust were frequently expressed in New York, but it never was in California. In fact, surprise was often expressed about the need to blur faces or get written consent in California schools. A general difference in the regard of research is clearly expressed.

Second, the size of school districts corresponded to the degree of personalization and standardization in the process of gaining permissions. Urban High, as the largest school and in the largest district had the least personal involvement and the most direct process. Suburban High required more work to discover what needed to be done and more personal involvement at both ends (though the principal deferred to the others). Boarding High, as the smallest

school, seemed to have everyone involved. Setting aside the complicated involvements of the program, permissions within Boarding High seemed straightforward until I required documentation. Then several people seemed to become involved behind the scenes. Thus the size of the communities and apparent history with research were relevant: In the largest community where research was likely to be common, the process was formal, and the smallest community was uncertain how to address a research proposal. These differences are indicative of the relations between administrations and students, reflecting the extent to which students are an anonymous group or collection of individuals within the system.

### **Description Of The Ethnography**

The ethnography consisted mostly of observation. Notes were written during class activities and supplemented and clarified while notes were entered into the computer. Maps of classrooms and schools were drawn and redrawn to aid memory and note where activities took place. See Appendix C for examples. These maps were later adjusted and supplemented with the use of official school maps. Notes frequently indicated where students were during activities and what areas were and were not used. At each school, three courses were observed, but the actual time on the campuses and the percentage of the courses observed were significantly different.

Suburban High was observed for the greatest total time, at approximately 76 hours. Three courses in sequential class periods were observed, usually once a week, from about six weeks into the school year until the final week. Each class was 50 minutes long with ten minutes between classes. Periods 2 through 4 were selected. Two of the three courses were Television Production, and the third was Advanced Television Production. Two other beginning classes were given in the afternoon but not studied. During the time before observations began, the beginning students did not use the cameras but spent time in more traditional activities, such as reading and lectures. One class was observed in the spring of the following year.

Urban High, though observed with almost the same frequency as Suburban High, had fewer hours and presented a far more irregular schedule. The school itself used an unusual yearly schedule, leading to two classes being observed for the second semester of one school year (2001-2002) and the third class being observed the first semester of the following year (2002-2003). The school held classes year-round with each of its three tracks being in school for different periods, such that two tracks were always in session. The "New Media Academy" held classes from July through November and January through April. "New Media 1" (for their first semester of camera work) and "New Media 2" were observed for the second semester of the school year. "New Media 3" was observed for the first semester of the following school year so that each of the three media teachers

would be included. Several students were also observed for two semesters. One class period of “New Media 3” was also observed at the end of the second semester. Each course was observed once a week, but because the school had a “block” schedule, meaning that classes met once a week for one hour and twice a week for two hours, class periods during the first year (school year 2001-2002) were split so that half of each two-hour class was observed for one hour.

Boarding High also had an unusual schedule because of the nature of the video program. The courses were to consist of only five classes, and three courses in all were observed. Some video projects from a fourth course were also viewed. With the exception of the first class of the third course (due to last minute notices), each class in its entirety was observed. Scheduling conflicts arose so that the last session of the first course was never held, but twice, arrangements were made to meet with students after school so that they could be interviewed. Also, two visits to the school were made to participate in extracurricular activities to which the community had been invited. One was a centennial celebration, and the other was a Pow Wow. Though these experiences contributed to my understanding of the schools in terms of the centrality of school history and the lack of connection to the surrounding community, notes were not kept on these events because I attended them as a participant and their research value was not initially recognized.

Table 1 shows a summary of the observation details for an easier comparison. The differences in observation reflect the differences in the schools and programs, and therefore are not expected to have a strong influence. Nevertheless, the level of familiarity with individuals was different and will be indicated in later discussions.

**Table 1: Observation Schedule**

School	Dates of Observation	Hours of Observation*	Number of Observations	% Classes Observed*
Boarding High	Oct. '01 – Nov. '01; Feb. '02 – March '02; Oct. '02 – Nov. '02	28	14	93%
Suburban High	Oct. '01 – June '02 (May '03)	80	28	20%
Urban High	Jan. '02 – April '02; July '02 – Oct. '02 (April '03)	52	27	20%

\*These numbers are approximate, based on indications in notes about school periods.

### **Researcher Participation, Conversations, and Formal Interviews**

Knowing about the nature of observations is essential in evaluating the information derived from them. My participation and interaction with students and instructors was greatly influenced by classroom activities, apparent perceptions of who I was, and the fact that I generally had a notebook in which I frequently jotted down notes. I had hoped to participate more actively but rarely found the opportunity or interest among the students and instructors, nor did the teachers and I have sufficient time together to plan anything. The teacher at

Suburban High occasionally asked me to “watch” things while he stepped out, and one of the teachers at Urban High explicitly said to a student that I could not monitor the class because I was not an employee of the school. At Boarding High, there were usually several extra people around when I was there because of the usual three college interns, the art teacher, and one or two project leaders, so that I was to some degree a part of a general chaos.

At Urban High, I attempted to offer opinions on work occasionally but became uneasy about doing so when a student told me that I should be teaching the class instead of their teacher. When students would directly ask what I was writing, I would read to them the last thing I had written and explain that I was just making notes so I would not forget, but frequently, I was simply ignored. This was most extreme at Urban High, which was remarked upon by a substitute one day. I participated more in the social life at Boarding High and the most at Suburban High, due largely to class structures. Students’ reactions to me clearly indicated the ambiguous role I had: They noticeably censured themselves in my presence but would tentatively say “inappropriate” things to watch my reaction. When circumstances permitted it, I asked questions. Important background information was obtained from teachers this way. I often waited through most of a class before finding a moment in which I could speak with teachers, but the teacher of “New Media 3” at Urban High was particularly communicative with me, taking frequent opportunities to express his views; he even took me to another

classroom where his “ideal” use of computers was being employed. I asked students fewer direct questions, but particularly at Suburban High, I had a number of casual conversations that sometimes were revealing and sometimes were merely chitchat. My interactions with students and teachers at each school are described when relevant, but my role in the classrooms is part of the methodology in that my subjective experiences in each school were distinct and part of the ethnography, which is why these details are relevant.

Interviews with student volunteers were conducted for the purpose of considering students’ personal understandings and explanations of their video work. Students were asked identifying information, including age, grade, and ethnicity, and to offer a name by which they would be known in the project. The conditions of the interviews varied enormously due to the constraints imposed by time and school schedules. I had a half an hour alone with some students but had to conduct one group interview to assure that all the students who were present would be included. Two sets of short interviews, each at a different school, were complicated by the presence of other students. Some interviews were conducted by phone, and two students were interviewed the following school year, one during lunch and another at a neighborhood shopping center. Two students disappeared just as I was preparing to interview them, which I understood as a decision on their part. The constant across all interviews was that students were asked for identifying information and about the meaning of their projects.

In the formal interviews, some questions were asked that were specific to the school or individual. At Suburban High, some students were asked about their future plans for video: Did they plan to take the advanced course the following year? And because it was a vocational program, were they considering a career in video? The group interview at Urban High on the last day of school led to an unusual mood as well as a focus-group style discussion: Students giggled and teased one another and mocked students who appeared in their video, and they responded to each other's comments. A student from the same group, interviewed alone the following semester, was extremely serious and expressive about her life as a Latina in Los Angeles schools, providing a stark contrast. At all schools, students were asked about their role in projects when it was not evident, and they were each given the opportunity to offer additional comments at the end.

When time and circumstances allowed and the videos made it worthwhile, the potentially most informative part of the interviews was requested: Students were asked to narrate all or parts of their videos. I asked them to explain what they were attempting to do and where they were during recordings but kept the instructions minimal so that they might tell me about what they believed was most important. When students said nothing for several seconds or I had a particular question, I asked something. This made many students more comfortable by keeping the narrations more of a dialog than a performance. Their comments and mine were recorded onto the second audio track of digital video

cassettes. A brief example is available in the electronic format of this dissertation in the file "Ill15withnarration.mov." For this dissertation, the narrations will be referred to minimally but serve to provide provide useful information and some evaluation of the microanalysis. Future research is anticipated to explore these narrations further. In all, 41 students and their parents gave consent to have their videotapes copied, 27 students participated in some type of interview, and 10 students narrated all or part of their work.

My participation also proceeded in another direction. Initially because of the need to blur faces in students' videos, I learned to use first iMovie and then Final Cut Pro video editing programs at the California/UCR Museum of Photography's Digital Studio. The Digital Studio provided a basic introduction and access to equipment to anyone who is interested in learning to use digital media.<sup>6</sup> Beginning with digital photography, I followed the structured independent lessons, participated in several studio and museum activities, and sought answers to my specific needs. So, while the students I observed were learning about video production, I was also. I had first taken a short class in video for academic uses at the Graduate Center, taught by David Chapin, for which I completed a project with the assistance of university personnel. At that time, digital video cameras were not yet available commercially, and the university denied personal access to the editing equipment. The rapid technological changes since then has made

---

<sup>6</sup> As of May 2004, the digital studio was closed to the public.

editing accessible to almost anyone with a computer. At the Digital Studio, where the focus was on editing, I completed three projects, one of which the director used in a show.<sup>7</sup>

### **Other Sources Of Information**

Information about the schools was sought through websites. Statistics and official descriptions of schools and programs were obtained this way. Urban High's video production program was part of a reform effort by a not-for-profit agency, thus a representative of this organization was interviewed and publications obtained. The program at Boarding High was also the product of an outside organization and funded through another organization. The internet and interviews provided information about these. A teacher from each school provided me with a newspaper clipping, which in addition to providing information specific to their schools also speaks to their relationship to their schools; two articles spotlighted student achievements (Boarding and Suburban Highs), and the third condemned the use of fraudulent attendance statistics (Urban High). Maps of each school campus were obtained through the school administrative offices.

Additional information about how video production courses are generally conducted was sought. Only four sources were found that specifically discuss secondary school video production (Goldman-Segall, 1998; Goodman, 2003;

---

<sup>7</sup> Doing “art” with video was something I found particularly challenging, despite (or perhaps because of) a background in photography.

Miller & Borowicz, 2003; Reilly, 1988), and these are central in describing a backdrop by which to characterize the programs studied. Textbooks were a source of both technical information and viewed as a potential structure for courses. Five other programs were also visited. Lastly, information has been collected from documents and student videos on school websites, from “Apple.com” (which has a vested interest in promoting educational applications of digital media), and a website referred to as “Varsity TV” (myvttv.com).

### **Video Production, Schools, And Courses From A Distance**

The idea that courses in video production would become a fixture of modern public education never occurred to me when I started exploring its uses as a methodology, but all indications are that some type of video production is finding its way into every system, if not every school, in the country. On one website with the goal of selling a youth-focused television channel (www.myvttv.com), youth produced videos from schools across North America are displayed. The representative from the station I spoke with (Rod Allan, personal communication, May 29, 2003) would provide details because the information is “proprietary,” but he confirmed that more than 1000 schools were participating. Many schools with the technical resources have developed their own websites, and festivals, contests, and school viewings are additional outlets for bringing student work to the world

beyond the classroom. Many other institutions, such as the YMCA and Paper Tiger Television (organizations with extremely different purposes), reach out to youth outside of school.

Discovering just how far-reaching the proliferation of video production courses is beyond the scope of this project, but another indication is the existence of at least five organizations in the United States seeking to further it. These five are: the American Film Institute, City Voices, City Visions of SUNY Buffalo (CVCV), the Digital Studio of the UCR/California Museum of Photography, the Educational Video Center of New York City (EVC), and Workforce LA of Los Angeles. All seek in some way to bring video production to secondary schools.

The rationale for promoting video varies. The American Film Institute is explicit only about the motivating influence of video production (American Film Institute, n.d.a, b), and student motivation is probably the most common reason for promoting video, being implicit in many other reasons. Concerns about student motivation is behind two of the ideals central to Workforce LA's program, described as a triangle of "personal engagement, real world relevance, and principles and standards" (J. Perry, personal communication, May 29, 2003). Personal engagement and real world relevance are two sides of what is inspiring about video and a part of what is missing in school for many adolescents.

Personal involvement by students necessitates making what is personal to students an acceptable and welcome part of school. Goodman, of EVC, describes

“a profound disconnect” between students and their schools, which is “the failure of schools and after-school programs to address the media as the predominant language of youth today, or to recognize the social and cultural contexts in which students live” (2003, p. 2). This, he argues, should lead us to making student worlds part of the school world. Some progress is possible by simply having students create something they commonly spend quantities of recreational time consuming. Personal involvement also comes with inviting issues of real concern into the classroom. Goodman quotes one teacher who reflects on the effects of such a project, “Because of the seriousness of the topic, [one student] had to be thoughtful. . . . He connected that with his own self-identity, as a hard worker and as a competent student” (p. 91). Thus personal involvement reflects the potential of video to engage the self, which can extend to other classes while it motivates intrinsically.

Real world relevance, on the other hand, motivates extrinsically, and it can arise in at least two activities. The acquisition of marketable skills is stressed in vocational preparation. Workforce LA is not explicitly trying to prepare students for careers in media production, but it is funded by several companies in the entertainment industry (Workforce LA, n.d.a, b), suggesting a potential desire on the industry’s part for vocational training. Many programs not involved in Workforce LA are explicitly vocational. “Suburban High” has such a program, the

instructor indicating that new vocational programs were needed as industrial arts and auto mechanics became less viable.

The second form of world relevance comes in the opportunity to present work to audiences, who tend to value video as entertainment. CVCV is explicit in this concern: “The students’ motivation for learning and using language more effectively in these projects was traced to the fact that they were . . .

*communicating* [italics added] their findings about their own community to a real audience” (Miller and Borowicz, 2003, p. 5). Goodman (2003) also discusses the powerful effect of public screenings on students, noting its motivating effects beforehand and the transformation that occurs in the role students have in the community, which in turn transforms how students see themselves.

This leads to the most fundamental reason for including video production in a high school curriculum: the promotion of learning and development. For the promoters of video production, there is no doubt of its educational value, but as with all non-traditional subjects, administrators and teachers of core academic subjects frequently question its value. The educational value is explicit in the third criterion Workforce LA promotes, that of principles and standards, but a representative noted difficulty in getting some teachers to develop these in their practices ( J. Perry, personal communication, May 29, 2003). Perhaps some of the problem that teachers have in establishing standards is the usual dependence on tests to shape what is to be learned; establishing criteria outside that which the

school system will explicitly test is relatively uncommon. CVCV describes their “ultimate goal . . . [as] fostering student achievement . . . [in] analytic/visual thinking and understanding” (Miller and Borowicz, 2003, p. 5), but they do it by integrating video production into more basic courses such as social studies, which on an ideological level has the effect of making video production more of a tool and less of subject within itself. Programs frequently regard this aspect of video as promoting some type of *literacy* (Reilly, 1998; Goodman, 2003).

A last reason offered for video production is rarely explicit. When explicit, it stresses the personal rather than the political. The goal is that of seeking to empower students. Of the organizations considered, only EVC elaborates on this goal. Goodman (2003) described the world of urban youth as one of exploitation by the media and criminalization by the justice system. Thus EVC seeks “a critical literacy [that] empowers low-income, urban teenagers” (p. 3). Goodman stresses the political potential of video to provide a voice to silenced and exploited populations, thus initiating change. This potential is stressed with a different population by Chalfen (1992), who discusses the political uses of video by indigenous populations as a way to advocate for themselves.

I have found a complimentary potential for empowerment in the student producer’s ability to alter her or his position in the immediate social context through the selection of topics, direction of actors, and manipulation of events and places (Beaty, 1998, 2000). By including students in the research process as

videographers, Goldman-Segall observed a similar effect in relation to research: Students became “creators of their own cultural artifacts” and thus ceased to be subjects of study (1998, p. 36). In video production—as with all project based inquiry—students become directors of their activities, and the video camera becomes a tool for moving around the school, selecting activities, and influencing the acts of other people. But despite a growing need, political implications are rarely explicit in the design of courses.

The challenge still remains for our nation's schools and after-school programs to effectively teach all students. . . . To fully face this challenge requires the teaching of literacy in a way that organically links the students' development of language with honest exploration of the contemporary world around them in all its aspects, including their treatment at the hands of the criminal justice system and the media culture industries. As producers, authors, and artists fluent in multiple literacies, inner-city youth can frame their own place in society. (Goodman, 2003, p. 31)

Many obstacles exist for schools when undertaking a video production program. Goodman (2003) discusses the lack of recognition by state agencies for media education, the competition for time, a place, and funds, the interdisciplinary nature of video, and the lack of “academic rituals that supposedly give a subject its weight and rigor, such as tests, book reports, and nightly

homework” (p. 101). Obtaining funds and a place are only the initial obstacles as teachers confront additional hurdles. It should be of no surprise, therefore, that each of the issues Goodman mentions were active in the courses that were studied.

Vocational programs in video production, or more often “television production” courses, have been instituted more easily because they fit squarely into the existing structure of schools. They are appropriately separated from the more fundamental subjects and reserved for those seeking vocational training or electives, thus losing the interdisciplinary nature of the subject. This separation frequently brings in necessary resources. In California, for example, classes designated as “Regional Occupational Programs” receive additional funds from the counties. Organizations such as Workforce LA are another way around the resource problem, but a potential obstacle to meaningful reform, according to the interviewed representative, is that schools primarily seeking money and equipment are rarely committed to change, thus this organization has removed the enticement of such “riches” as computers, cameras, and studios from their current projects (J. Perry, personal communication, May 29, 2003). There have been a number of grants available for technology in recent years, but getting the equipment is only the first problem.

Video production courses can also struggle with their role within a school once they have been initiated. Teachers at two schools talked about difficulties in

having their courses taken seriously by students, other teachers, and administration. Courses can gain legitimization by using textbooks, assigning traditional homework, and having tests of vocabulary and other objective criteria, despite these working in opposition to many reform efforts. The political quest for accountability and evidence-based curriculum (and narrow definitions of evidence) may increasingly necessitate such practices. There is also the needs of the student population, which may include certificates of competence or evidence of “well-roundedness” for college applications. Therefore, actual courses have many names, ideologies, and types of resources.

### **Neighborhoods, Campuses, And Names**

A description of the programs that were studied begins with a description of the schools and communities in which they are embedded, and the names given each school require an explanation. Urban High is in south Los Angeles in an area the school website describes as having high unemployment, a high proportion of single family homes and families receiving AFDC, and many multi-family homes. Walking around the neighborhood, the discrepancies were striking: There were many houses that appeared to be single family homes with well tended, if small, yards, and among these were many small apartment houses—usually less well taken care of. Most of the windows had bars on them, but across from the school was a large apartment complex that was new and attractive and without bars. A few other such complexes were in the area. Within sight of the school was a large

public sports complex (which caused me to get stuck in traffic more than once) and parking was complicated by the usual urban problems of street cleanings and insufficient accommodations. The school provided a small parking lot for staff and a smaller parking lot for students, which was locked during classes, but there was not enough room to accommodate visitors. The majority of students rode school buses or city buses. The run-down gas station across the street and the half empty storefronts directly in front of the school gave a distinct feel of poverty, even with the new apartments rising up from behind the stores. The lack of foliage, constant stream of cars, proximity with the few tall buildings to be found in Los Angeles, and the unevenness in the age and condition of buildings make the neighborhood distinctly urban.

Suburban High, on the other hand, is not in a distinctly suburban neighborhood, having some urban qualities. A definition of suburbia can be difficult (see the website [www.turnmeondeadman.net](http://www.turnmeondeadman.net), *Beneath the blue suburban sky: Images of suburbia in American movies*, for a discussion of the definition in relation to movies), but the term is used in part because of the neighborhood. The school is surrounded on three sides by modest, single-family homes, each having yards, driveways, and garages. Across the busy street in front of the school were a number of small apartment buildings with more houses beyond them. There were no businesses within sight of the school and none that students could easily walk to. The school is, however, in a city—a city at some distance from Los Angeles. It

is a city that only recently has acquired LA commuters as the price of houses has forced people to move farther and farther out. The neighborhood the school is in, however, is not composed of the large, luxurious suburban homes some LA employees are fleeing to; the neighborhood is distinctly less wealthy than these, being in an older part of the city and showing the more modest incomes of their owners through small signs of decay and more modest cars in the driveways. The school is not a wealthy suburban school. The title of Suburban, however, is also earned because many students drive to school, and a “culture of cars” is more prevalent as students discuss mechanics and show off keys and other car accessories in class. The school has two large parking lots, the one in front of the building having a section reserved for visitors and a section for staff and the larger parking lot in the back of the school being reserved for students. Thus Suburban High seemed an appropriate name, describing many of the characteristics that contrast those of Urban High.

Evans reported that schools are “isolated in park-like settings” (1979, p. 32), but this is clearly not always the case as urban schools tend to have a distinct shortage of room. New York City high schools rarely have outside places for students beyond the athletic fields. In contrast, most southern California schools are able to make greater use of and have more outdoor areas: Many schools, including Urban High, have lunch tables outside to supplement indoor cafeterias. This use of the campus allows schools to send all their students to lunch at the

same time. Urban High's outdoor eating area was always full at lunch time (see in Illustration 1, Still 3), while as the indoor cafeteria rarely had more than a few students in it. The areas between buildings and indoor hallways were also busy at this time.

**Illustration 1: Stills From Student Projects That Show Campuses**



Still 1: Urban campus from Project 8 in Table B2 (Appendix B)



Still 2: Suburban Campus from Bob's early work (his extra long shot)



Still 3: Urban campus from Project 8 in Table B2



Still 4: Suburban campus from Bob's early work

Urban High's grounds, therefore, have some elements of a park. In addition to tables, there is grass and flowers around the entrance and a grassy area with benches and trees in the middle of campus, but most of the campus is paved and the whole is surrounded by a high fence with signs telling passerbys to watch out for crime. The campus has 14 separate buildings—the largest and oldest of which

have two floors—and several more trailers, including one that is a police sub-station. The quality of the buildings vary. The four biggest buildings looked solid and had professional murals and display cases inside; they contained most of the traditional courses. Other buildings looked flimsy and dirty; many of these held vocational classes. Much of the outside areas, with additional fences to separate them from where students traverse, is devoted to tennis, basketball, football, and track but are easily seen as one walks from building to building. The campus occupied three city blocks.

Suburban High, on the other hand, occupies a nearly 60-acre plot of land with tall trees, large lawns, and picnic tables sprinkled throughout the middle of the campus. The athletic arenas cannot be seen from the main campus, being hidden by the gymnasium and sheer distance. A pool is immediately behind the gym. There is even a community park at one end of the property. The school has 24 brick buildings and a few trailers, though none of the buildings are more than one story high. The campus is pleasant and large. Stills from student works demonstrate the differences between the campuses in Illustration 1.

The classrooms also have different connections to the campus. All of the classrooms at Suburban High have doors facing outside, whereas at Urban High, the classrooms of the three main buildings and the offices in the administration building face internal hallways, leaving the less substantial and less academic buildings with immediate access to the outside. Illustration 2 has examples.

### Illustration 2: Still Images From Shots That Show “Hallways”



Still 1: Urban hallway from Project 7



Still 2: Suburban hallway from Bob's early work

Suburban High thus has no hallways—the place described by Hemmings as student spaces (2002). The impact on student activity is mixed: Suburban students have more physical *space*, but in line with Foucault’s (1980) comments, the large open areas afforded heightened surveillance, which constrains activity in a less direct but more thorough manner than having less *space*. The smaller areas in hallways, stairwells, and between or behind buildings at Urban High facilitated many “elicit” actions (Hemmings). I was surprised that students were allowed to occupy hallways and stairwells during lunch with little supervision, contributing to a sense that students owned these areas at Urban High far more than students at Suburban High were able to own their large park-like areas. On the other hand, the newer and cleaner condition of the buildings and campus at Suburban High indicated a difference in resources or resource allocation. At Urban High, the maintenance and attractiveness of the material environment declined as its distance from the administrative offices increased, suggesting through condition

and distance which places in the school were priorities.

Another contrast between Urban and Suburban Highs is the buildings' dates of construction: The main buildings at Urban High were built in the 1930s, while the buildings at Suburban High were built in the 1950s, reflecting therefore a more traditional notion of suburbia. Both schools reflect history, however: They each had information about their histories on their websites that provide messages consistent with my reading of the campuses. Urban High described the earthquakes that required reconstruction, and Suburban High told the story of the land on which it was built. Urban High's history was a story of obstacles that were overcome, and Suburban High told the story of property and generous gifts.

Boarding High is unlike the other two schools in two significant ways. First, it is a boarding school; students go to their dorms after school rather than to their homes in the community. There is a relative disconnection from the surrounding area for this reason. Boarding High is additionally different from Urban and Suburban Highs and "normal" boarding schools because it is for Native Americans and governed by the Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs. It also has a long history—commemorated in an on-site museum. The original school was a place for Indians to be assimilated into European-American culture, where they were not allowed to speak their native languages or participate in traditional activities. Disease and extreme poverty led to the death of many students. Now the school works to preserve that history and to maintain Native cultures, but there are

reasons to doubt the sincerity of these efforts as one writer on the internet indicated that traditional ceremonies had been replaced by Christian ones.

Most of the staff seemed to be Native American<sup>8</sup>, and artwork throughout the buildings had Native themes, but the school was in the midst of urban sprawl rather than on a reservation. And the buildings themselves were distinctly contemporary, built some time in the late 1970s, when the old buildings failed to meet new earthquake standards. These school buildings and the dormitories, however, had distinctly different characters: The six school buildings (including gymnasium, auditorium, and pool) were large, solid, new looking buildings made of brick. Their halls were full of colorful murals, painted by students during the 1990s. The dormitories, which I never saw inside except through one student video, were built in the 1960s and were considerably more modest. The school is on approximately ten acres, estimated to be almost twice the size of the Urban High grounds and one sixth that of Suburban High. There was no issue of students driving to school, but the parking lot was much larger than what the staff needed.

The school was surrounded by apartment complexes, a church, small businesses, a Christian school, a small shopping center, a grocery, and—a little farther—a freeway. The teacher reported that students' favorite place to go—

---

8 Statistics were unavailable, but the art teacher indicated that she was one-eighth Native, despite any identifying characteristics, and many staff members had names and appearances suggesting Native identities.

when they were allowed to leave—was a large shopping mall two miles away. The school, however, was cut off from the community by a large span of grass that separated it from the main street, and the parking lot put distance between it and the street it faced. There was a chainlink fence around the perimeter, but it was not imposing and would not be difficult to climb<sup>9</sup>; there were also several openings in it. Refer to Illustration 3 for pictures from student work.

**Illustration 3: Still Images Of The Campus At Boarding High**



Still 1: Between the Academic and Fine Arts Buildings from Project 15



Still 2: The path by the Student Center with a dorm in the background from Project 16



Still 3: The honors dorm from Project 15



Still 4: Hallway in the Academic Building from Project 15

---

9 In fact, one student project that was never completed showed girls sneaking off to climb the fence.

The grounds were park-like with perfectly paved paths cutting across mowed grass and between buildings. A sculpture stood in front of the main door (visible in Still 1), and a large square was between the school buildings and most of the dorms. Plots of grass surrounded the concrete square, and along one side was a shelter with picnic tables beneath it. The shelter was the only part of the campus clearly marked by student work: The names of senior class officers and other adornment were imperfectly painted there. By comparison, the murals around the school seemed flawless. While both Boarding and Suburban Highs had attractive, park-like grounds, the Boarding High park was incredibly manicured by comparison, having recently been re-landscaped. At Suburban High, tree roots had cracked blacktopped paths, but the tall trees of Boarding High stood like an oasis—set back away from the buildings—while the near trees were still too young for shade. The immaculate appearance suggests a strong concern with appearances.

The names of the schools, Urban High, Suburban High, and Boarding High, therefore reflect two major characteristics. They reflect the communities they are in and their relationships with those communities: High fences versus low fences, grass versus concrete, and the amount and use of land; and they reflect the mode of arrival and departure: automobiles versus buses, daily versus once a term. At all schools, the sterility of the institution dominated, but only at Urban High was this softened somewhat by pink (coral?) walls and sheer decay, and only here did

the students make a significant material presence through regular signs about activities and murals that were clearly student creations. A student presence was always detectable bodily as well at Urban High but strangely absent on the grounds of the other two schools. Perhaps students should not have been moving around campus during classes, but somehow it gave the grounds a life that did not exist at the other two schools. But of course, these descriptions are only the beginning of the story, being the most observable characteristics. Though perhaps not much deeper, the official stories are told next as obtained from web pages and school “report cards.”

### **Official School Statistics And Stories**

Each school had its own webpages that can be understood as presenting an official story of the school and some sort of “school report card” for public evaluation, but the categories of information available is sufficiently different to make a precise comparison impossible. The information presented in Table 2 was selected to provide an overview of the schools, but there are many reasons to interpret the information cautiously, a few of which will be described.

The most reliable information, with one exception, is that regarding enrollment and ethnic composition. The exception is at Boarding High, where all the students are Native American, but the total enrollment is questionable: During the first video production program, a huge portion of the class, reflecting a school-

**Table 2: Summary of Official School Statistics**

Figures are approximations when appropriate.

	<b>Boarding High 2001-2002</b>	<b>Suburban High 2000-2001<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Urban High 2001-2002</b>
Enrollment	500	2000	3500
European-American	0%	45%	0.1%
African-American	0%	10%	20%
Latino	0%	40%	80%
Native American	100%	0.4%	0.1%
Other Ethnic Origin	0%	5%	0.3%
Attendance	98%	94%	83%
Dropout rate	0.2%	0.8%	2.5%
Proficient or Better in English Language Arts	50%	20% (CST) <sup>b</sup>	5% (CST) <sup>b</sup>
Proficient or Better in Reading	50%	-	-
Above 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile of Stan 9 Reading	-	30% <sup>b</sup>	10% <sup>b</sup>
Proficient or Better in Mathematics	60%	-	1% (CST) <sup>b</sup>
Above 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile of Stan 9 Math	-	50% <sup>b</sup>	15% <sup>b</sup>
California Fitness Test	-	30%	10%
Violent Incidents	37 <sup>c</sup>	-	-
Substance Use	545 <sup>c</sup>	-	-
Suspensions	-	302 (15%)	628 (18%)
Expulsions	-	6 (0.3%)	4 (0.1%)
Teachers in Core Areas	16	-	-
Number of Teachers (With Full Credentials)	-	86 (79)	174 (140)

<sup>a</sup>The school report for 2001-2002 was as yet unavailable.

<sup>b</sup>This number represents an average of the reported scores across grade levels.

<sup>c</sup>There was no report in the 2001-2002 report; this data is from 2002-2003

wide event, was “sent home.”<sup>10</sup> The teacher reported that there were only about 200 students left, but there are no statistics that reflect this huge shift. The following school year, the number of students enrolled was reported as being over 700—almost 50% more than the previous year—and when I visited the school that year for the third video program, the class was sufficiently large that the teacher allowed only half of the students to participate in the video program. The visits, however, were before the mass expulsion had taken place the previous year, thus I currently can only guess as to how normal the action is. What is clear is that the school was tiny compared to the other two schools, and that Suburban High was about half the size of Urban High.

The ethnicity of students in Suburban and Urban High Schools fit my expectations of the major difference between the suburban and urban areas: “Minority” (in the U.S.) students are nearly 100% of the Urban students and an actual minority in Suburban High. The story offered about Urban High is that it was almost entirely African American twenty years ago but has smoothly made the transition to being mostly Latino, the students coming mostly from Central America. Suburban High, on the other hand, has no majority. While European-Americans are the largest group, the Latino population is just behind it. Nevertheless, there is the impression that European-Americans dominate, which

---

<sup>10</sup> It is not known whether or not these students were permitted to reapply for the following school year, but they were expelled for the year in question.

may reflect the ethnicity of teachers and administration for whom there are no statistics available.

The attendance at Boarding High appears to be higher than the other two schools, which is not surprising because they live at school, but I question that the dropout rate is truly as low as indicated. The art teacher at Boarding High said that her students were mostly there as a last resort—that they had been expelled from every other school. And if half the students are sent home every year, they would not officially be considered dropouts. It is possible that a significant number came back the following year or attend other schools; I did speak with more than one eighteen and nineteen year old while there. Nevertheless, there are significant reasons to doubt the dropout rate.

Similar problems exist at Urban High. The attendance rate is the lowest of the three schools, but whether or not it is accurate, it does not reflect attendance in the New Media 1 class, where there were usually only half the number of students that were officially registered for the class. Additionally, the teacher of New Media 3 provided a newspaper story that described a numbers game in calculating the dropout rate, which included counting youths who had runaway as having moved. The rate listed in Table 2 is about two percent higher than the previous two years, which can be attributed to the new principal, but Fine (1991) discusses a whole system of hiding the numbers while pushing youth out of school without a diploma.

Performance on standardized tests is also a problem. The report about Boarding High did not specify which test had been given, and the comparatively high rate of success indicates a difference in measures. A comparison between Urban and Suburban is possible, indicating that neither school did particularly well but that Suburban students performed well above Urban students. While this is not a surprise, the magnitude of difference is: Suburban High was 20 percentage points higher than Urban on reading and 31 points on mathematics. The most shocking score is the one indicating that only one percent of Urban High students were proficient in mathematics. Even in fitness, Suburban High students performed more than twice as well as Urban High students. These scores mean something, though perhaps not what they are intended to mean.

Substantial differences in student behavior problems or student/teacher ratios are not detectable with the available information, but it should be noted that Urban High was the only school at which I witnessed a lock down due to the discovery of a homemade bomb. A review of crime statistics at the school revealed such a wide range of incidents—such as zero “chemical substance abuses” in 2001-2002 and 16 in 2000-2001 and 35 in 1999-2000 or 4, 1, and 11 incidents respectfully of “possession of weapons”—that they are difficult to interpret, and such a report was not available for the other schools.

The big pieces of missing information concern the relative poverty of students and the percent of students who have English as a second language. At

Boarding High, general statistics about Native populations and indications by the teacher suggest that students come from relatively poor backgrounds—perhaps more so than at the other two schools—but specifics can only be guessed at from available information. There are no indications about the level of English proficiency. At Urban High and Suburban High, different measures of performance are broken down by whether students are “socio-economically disadvantaged” or not and in terms of their language dominance, but there are no numbers to clarify how many students fit these descriptions. The 2000 census ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)) indicates that the neighborhoods in which the schools were located had median family incomes between \$14,939 and \$32,768 for Urban High and \$40,221 and \$49,187 for Suburban High. Urban High is a Title 1 school, meaning that at least 40% of students come from impoverished homes (US Department of Education, n.d.), and 35% of the students were considered to be English Learners. The school report for Suburban High from the year 1998-1999 shows that more than 40% of students received free lunch, up 3% from the previous year, and 7% were Limited-English Proficient. Thus some degree of poverty can be assumed to exist at all three schools, but Urban High is probably the only school with a high proportion of students whose primary language is other than English.

The main website for Boarding High was rarely functioning, but when it did, it offered applications and important dates—information specifically for

students and potential students—and a few photographs of students doing art work. A related website was consistently working and focused on the history of the school. The school's history as a place where Native Americans went to lose their identity and live in poverty is put forth, maintaining an implicit story that things are different now. The Centennial celebration I attended devoted a section of the school and many programs to the school's history of assimilation and humiliation. While a clear message about the history of the school exists, the present is left somewhat ambiguous. In addition to the unofficial history on an online Native journal, which mourns the loss of traditional ceremonies at the school Pow Wow, I found an interesting discrepancy between the Bureau of Indian Affairs's (2001) assertion that "American Indian" was the preferred term and what the students said when I asked them; they all preferred Native American. The history and an unofficial website suggest an uneasy relationship between students and the school, but officially there is no recognition of it. This uneasiness is furthered by the location of the school: away from Native resources.

The websites of the other schools consistently worked, but the Urban High site changed little over the two and a half years I have visited it. The page devoted to the history of Urban High did not change at all but got a new year written on the bottom recently. Much of the Urban High website is clearly out of date, and few teachers have personal websites. The websites students made as part of their New Media 1 class were not posted on the internet. The message from the

principal on the School Report Card stresses the evidence of a school committed to improvement, implicitly admitting how bad things are but remaining positive.

Suburban High, in contrast, clearly uses its website to communicate with the community. It conveys scheduling information, announcements, and sports events. There is contact information for most staff, including email addresses, and the video program uses the site internally to broadcast their news program. The principal's note in the Suburban Annual School Report commented on a change in administration and acknowledged being below the desired Academic Performance Index; they could afford to admit this deficiency because they were not far below it. At Urban High, the ethnic background and the economic status are important because they relate to academic deficiencies, but the website is for show and a largely abandoned project. Perhaps there is an assumption that their families do not use the internet. At Suburban High, the website actively maintains connections and schedules but does not acknowledge who its students are, reflecting a more suburban concern with school athletics, clubs, and property.

### **Program Affiliations And Official Ideologies**

Goodman discussed three dominant strands of media education for youth:

*technology integration, media literacy, and community media arts* (2003, p. 10).

These serve to effectively distinguish the different intents behind video production programs, though many actual programs are not pure examples of any of these

movements. Reformers' interest in student motivation is also neglected in this scheme. Nevertheless, one program in this project can be tentatively put in each category, demonstrating their diversity. Suburban High had a vocational program with a clear focus on technology, and therefore is concerned with technology integration. Most of the technology, however, is particular to a vocation rather than being an introduction to computers: Editing on the computers was not introduced until the second semester, and most of the equipment is pre-digital technology. Officially, the program is a county one, and therefore one student ("Luke") who returned to "home schooling" part way into the year was able to continue taking the class. The official names of the classes are "TV and Video Production" and "Advanced TV and Video Production."

The television program was central to the school in terms of location, its association with the performing arts department, and its function in school life. The classroom was "Room 1" and was in the middle of campus (See Appendix C, Map 2). The television production teacher also taught two unobserved courses and a theater "tech" course, running—with advanced students—all the technical equipment in the theater and during pep rallies and other assemblies. An end-of-the-year awards ceremony for the performing arts included the television production students, and the annual video about awardees was created by a group of beginning students. The integration into the school was completed by the official requirement that all classrooms watch the five minute news program

that was broadcast on an intranet four days a week. The people in front of the camera became well known. Thus the program was officially autonomous as a county program but was actively integrated into the performing arts program in particular and into school life more generally.

Urban High officially fit into Goodman's media literacy strand of programs, though the activities reflected an uncertainty about what this ideological stance meant. The school was one of several to begin a "New Media Academy" through a not-for-profit organization with goals of integrating video production into core classes and creating a smaller community. The "academy" at Urban High, however, never accomplished the desired integration: The classes, referred to as New Media 1, 2, and 3, were treated as electives by the administration, and the connections between classes and between students were not made, creating contradictions at an official level. The number of students put in classes was also prohibitive. One teacher directly asked students to leave if they did not want to be there.

The two teachers who taught the advanced courses also taught English and achieved some degree of overlap, but it was English—through the reading of plays and assignment of grammar exercises during media classes—that came to dominate. The New Media 1 teacher also taught social studies and culinary arts, and though there was an effort to integrate culinary arts into New Media 1, there were no indications that this relation was reversed or included social studies.

Thus the goal of creating an academy was not supported by the school and not fully carried out by the teachers.

The disjunction within program ideals was exemplified at the spatial level: When I began observing in January 2002, New Media 2 and 3 had just been assigned to a huge storage room that had once been the automechanics classroom, which they were to use while they awaited the building of a studio. The room was used for both English and New Media, occupying the room simultaneously. The teacher of New Media 1, meanwhile, used a classroom at the opposite end of the campus in the Science Building. This room had clearly been designed for culinary arts, having sinks, stoves, and refrigerators, but the teacher held all his classes there. New Media 1 was thus segregated from the more advanced classes, and the goal of creating a cohesive community was impossible to pursue. The following school year, one of the advanced teachers moved into another, more traditional classroom, choosing to have students read a script and watch how it had been made into a movie rather than doing any production. The teacher of New Media 1 limited his teaching to social studies and culinary arts. The teacher of New Media 3, as the only one involved in video production, spread out through the half of the room which had been cleared of stored items. When I spoke with him the second semester (spring 2003), however, he reported that the school was hiring a vocational instructor and that the studio, which he had

believed would finally be built that year, had still not materialized. The New Media Academy would officially be dissolved in favor of a vocational program.

The Boarding High program was clearly a community media arts program according to Goodman's categories, being the product of two arts organizations, college art students, and a high school art teacher. The digital media group, whose purpose was to bring digital artists and community members together for the propagation of digital art, acquired grants from a not-for-profit funding agency to connect with local high schools. The funding agency was explicitly concerned with bringing art to the community. The digital media group was preparing to enter its second school when I made contact. Each course aimed to have groups of students produce complete videos in five sessions. Two such courses had been smoothly completed at another school the previous year, and the director of the program proudly showed me some of the pieces the students had completed, demonstrating program successes. Additional evidence of this success arose when this school purchased its own equipment.

The Boarding High art teacher, who hosted the digital program, sought groups to visit and present a wider range of artistic experiences, telling me that the previous art teacher had taught only Native crafts such as beading. She believed it was important that students be introduced to a wide range of arts. The first course I observed had a representative from the funding organization, who had already done a short photography program there. There were also three

college interns and the program director. The program and art class thus were a good match, but a degree of isolation from the rest of the school was apparent in the lack of connection between interns and the school and in the use of a classroom door on the outside of the building that prevented interns from even seeing any other interiors (except for the office where they signed in and out).

### **Material Environments And Resources**

A comparison of the available materials is necessary to consider how the material environment *participates* in program activities. (See the maps in Appendix C, which demonstrate the configuration of the campuses.) The way video production was *framed* (Latour, 1996) by the material world is frequently not visible in the actual videos: An analysis of institutional constraints (ZFM) and promotions (ZPA) requires information from observation because much of what was observed in classrooms arises in videos only in their absence; most video projects (particularly at Urban and Suburban Highs) demonstrated efforts to escape campus constraints by recording off campus, and what happens in response to particular depicted features cannot happen in the absence of these features.

The overall impact of the material environment was most prevalent at Urban High. The locations and arrangements of Urban High's New Media classrooms posed clear constraints: New Media 1 had everything needed to cook but lacked much of what is needed for video, particularly sufficient room within

the classroom for recording. Students sat at large, round tables that so completely filled the room it was difficult to move among them. The teacher was thus constrained in his access to students and students were constrained in their movement. I was also limited in interacting with students. Recording and editing required going to another classroom, where all the equipment was kept. There was one computer and several more in an adjoining room, but these were not equipped with editing software. The result was that there were frequent difficulties and only one video was edited from a semester's worth of work. Students commented that they did not even know editing was an option.

Urban High's "studio" (see Appendix C, Map 5), where advanced classes were held, was by contrast huge but almost as crowded. An odd assortment of desks and tables was in the room, but what made it crowded was the boxes of monitors that had never been opened, old school furniture, and other school equipment, including a large lawn mower. The room had accommodations nevertheless for production with some rearranging, and the teachers initially responded with an eagerness to put their mark on it: Attempts to have students paint the room had resulted in a design of hand prints near the door in addition to areas of fresh paint, and the effort to create "sets" had led to an array of furniture. An area in the main room was separated by boxes and old display cases to create one "set," and a balcony overlooking the room held another arrangement of salvaged furniture. Efforts to adapt the room lasted only the first

month, however, and the potential of the room—during their first semester of using it—was overwhelmed by the difficulty of having two classes share the room at once.

Unlike the Media 1 classroom, the Studio had the room and the technology for producing videos: Computers lined two sections of wall during the second semester, promoting an emphasis on editing, which was supported by one teacher, and all the equipment was stored there in a locked closet. But both Urban High classrooms were crowded with objects that had nothing to do with video. The Studio was in essence a warehouse that the school continued to use as such, storing materials even in the yard around the room. And both rooms showed their age in dirt and disrepair. The impact of these qualities was not directly observed because they did not directly constrain activity, but there is a potential message about the value of the students and the program, and it did nothing to establish an identity for the program.

Suburban High, by contrast, had a noticeably newer building and newer furniture than Urban High, but even with a greater degree of uniformity among the tables and chairs, there was a certain chaotic quality due to the amount of equipment in the room; every surface seemed to have materials stacked on it. The effect, however, was quite different because it all related to video. Student tables were rearranged as needed and routinely shoved out of the way of the school news show, but the room afforded these transformations. (See Appendix C, Map

3.) The news show had a set that included an anchor desk raised a few inches by a wooded platform, thus representing the advanced class in the beginning classes and serving as a promotion of a “news” orientation. Lights hung from brackets set in the ceiling, but the room lacked a lighting grid, limiting where lights could be positioned and constraining the flexibility of arrangements. A control room was at one end of the room, which had a door connecting it to the next classroom—a music composition room—helping maintain a connection to other performing arts subjects. The music teacher, at least, maintained contact with the television production teacher and worked with her students to provide music for a video. The overall chaotic appearance seemed less chaotic as I accustomed myself to the boundaries of the different sections and the routine transformations. It was clearly a room for television production with a functioning, if small, studio. The room and its contents were not new, but they had been maintained. Unlike the studio at Urban High, the objects that filled the room had purposes and were used. The Boarding High art classroom was similarly marked as an art room. Art was everywhere, on every wall. The room was divided into two sections: On one side, the teacher had a desk facing rows of tables, while the larger section of the room had work tables with stools at them. Most of the time, the surfaces of the tables were clear and ready for work. There was plenty of room, particularly when the classes were small, and the room was full of color and self-expression. By comparison, at both Urban and Suburban schools, the material on the walls was

mostly published materials with academic content; such publications were overwhelmed by student work at Boarding High.

### **Production Equipment**

Some artifacts have particular significance: those used in video production. First to note is that there exists a divide between “Mac” users and “PC” users<sup>11</sup> that is particularly noticeable among videographers. An artist/teacher who was setting up a program at another school I visited told me that he had spoken to a number of artists who all preferred MacIntosh computers, but MacIntosh cost much more. One group of college interns told me they could not afford them, thus they were struggling because they did not really know iMovie, the Apple program they were teaching students to use in the course.<sup>12</sup>

Both Boarding High and Urban High used Macs: iBooks (low-end laptops) at Boarding High, where the equipment came and went with the interns, and iMacs (low-end desktops) at Urban High. By contrast, Suburban High used PCs with Windows, which reflects a more profound ideological difference than may immediately be apparent. Macs require a greater initial financial commitment, but my observations suggest that less work by “experts” (the teacher at Suburban High) is necessary in the use of Macs. More importantly, the program iMovie is far

---

11 To my knowledge, the other operating system, Linux, has yet to fully develop editing software.

12 I chose to purchase a Mac and Final Cut Pro for editing student videos because it was what I had learned to use and my PC was too old to be easily adapted.

easier, though with fewer advanced options, than Adobe Premiere, the program used at Suburban High. Premiere is a rough equivalent to Apple's Final Cut Pro in terms of advanced options. The ease of using iMovie was essential at both schools where it was used: Boarding High students had very little time to spend on their projects and could not afford to spend it learning a more complicated program. At Urban High, the teachers lacked expertise with video technology; they could not have taught students a more complicated program and did not need to teach them iMovie because students taught themselves.

The choice of digital or analog cameras is also meaningful. Boarding High has the simplest story: The students were provided with digital camcorders, small cameras that transmit audio and video quickly and directly into computers via a "firewire" in a process typically referred to as *capturing*.<sup>13</sup> The story is not that simple, however, because the number of cameras that were available varied from class to class as they came and went with the college interns. During the first course, one camera was left with the art teacher for a couple of weeks, but this practice was not repeated. In fact, the interns had difficulty obtaining equipment for the second course because other people were using it and the director was less involved, thus I lent them my camcorder to allow students more access. An enormous constraint on students at Boarding High was, therefore, inherent in the lack of access to cameras and computers.

---

13 Other technology allows capturing of analog video, such a device put out by Dazzle that converts it to digital via a USB port. My own efforts to use such a device failed.

At Urban High, most of the cameras were digital camcorders, but the program also had Hi-8 camcorders, which are small like digital camcorders but required the videotapes to be copied onto digital cameras for capturing. One teacher reported that they received two Hi-8 cameras the first year and later received four digital camcorders. The number of working cameras varied, however, because they frequently were broken. The Media 1 class was given access only to the Hi-8 cameras. The advantage in Media 1, however, was that students were allowed to take Hi-8 camcorders home with them—a practice never allowed in the other two courses.

Suburban High had a different approach. It had Panasonic S-VHS cameras, which have some digital components but are still analog, thus they require additional hardware to convert their work into digital media. To some extent, these cameras are a more “professional” camera, though the technology is older. The artist/teacher I spoke with at another school, who used all digital equipment, argued that his equipment was more technologically advanced than most television stations, and the movie industry currently debates the use of digital cameras, so there is a rationale to using older equipment. The field is changing rapidly as high definition, satellite, and other technologies are developed, and which technologies will come to dominate is debatable. The Suburban High teacher took advantage of the shift to digital technology to get low cost, sometimes free equipment, because it was a little older. The S-VHS cameras are

very big by comparison to the camcorders, resting usually on the camera operator's shoulder when it is not on a tripod, but it worked well with the Telepromptors. The program had five S-VHS cameras until one was stolen; this was replaced at some point with video club money. One was also broken for a while. The bulky S-VHS cameras were not as easy to move around, but they tended to produce steadier images because of the shoulder support. Suburban High also had two VHS cameras—also substantially bigger than the camcorders but smaller than the S-VHS cameras—that the teacher allowed students to take home. This freedom in where to record made a noticeable difference in the activities included in video projects, such as the use of cars, trips to “sites,” and the existence of more elaborate projects.

Suburban High additionally had a wide range of video accessories—equipment that is not trivial in the quality of production. Lights and light stands, various types of microphones, tripods and tripod dollies, mixing boards, graphics generators, headsets, Telepromptors, linear editing devices (which work directly with videotape), and equipment for video streaming on the school intranet. The focus of beginning classes was to learn to operate all this equipment. Suburban students were afforded the possibility of creating professional quality videos, thus promoting a technical orientation. Urban High had, in addition to their cameras, two boom microphones and two floodlights with stands, which were used primarily without studying lighting or audio techniques, but students could not

have used them according to established patterns because the equipment was insufficient. Boarding High had access to no equipment beyond camcorders and iBooks.

Of the three schools, Suburban High had the most equipment but of the oldest technologies. Its classroom was a place devoted to video and more required technical knowledge. Students were able to train for professional studios as they are, though not for how they may soon become. Boarding High had the least equipment, but all of it was the newest technology available. It specifically was geared to exploring the digital revolution within the realm of art. Urban High was in between: It had all the equipment it needed for students to adequately, if not perfectly, create projects. Urban students could not have been prepared for immediate jobs in video production under these circumstances, but they were also not encouraged to explore digital affordances: Accessories such as tripods, lights, and microphones can dramatically change the quality of raw material, but digital editing, while unable to fix bad audio and video, can manipulate and alter footage beyond recognition. Neither of these were promoted in the activities or material resources at Urban High, but a focus on literacy was also lacking. The school had not committed to New Media as promoted by the reform project. The unevenness of material conditions within the school did not, however, seriously limit students; material conditions place the disconnection that was observed between students

**Table 3: Summary of Program Qualities**

	<b>Boarding High</b>	<b>Suburban High</b>	<b>Urban High</b>
<b>Orientation</b>	Digital Art	Vocational	Educational Reform
<b>Leading Activity</b>	experience with digital media	technological mastery	developing student projects
<b>Funding Source</b>	Community Arts Grant	Regional Occupational Program (county program)	Not-for-profit Reform organization
<b>Equipment</b>	borrowed digital camcorders and iBooks with iMovie	S-VHS cameras, various microphones and lights, Teleprompters, PC computers with Adobe Premiere	Hi-8 and digital camcorders, iMacs with iMovie, tripods, boom microphones, 2 lights
<b>Staffing</b>	college interns of both genders and various ethnicities	one male instructor of European descent	three male instructors of European descent
<b>Time Allotment</b>	5 class periods/course	5 class periods/week all year	2 block and 1 normal class period/week all year
<b>School Affiliations</b>	Special program in regular art course	Part of performing arts department	Intended as “Academy” but treated as elective
<b>Class Activities (to be further described in the following sections)</b>	introduced with example projects, iMovie tutorial in 1 <sup>st</sup> course only, prompts and assistance during work, hallpasses to enable recording (interns accompanying only in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> session)	technical lectures and presentations, book reports, independent practice with equipment, narrowly defined assignments to address technological topics, 2 edited group projects	New Media 1: 3 group projects with presentations of plans for class approval New Media 2: project pitches, 1 production—suspended, English work New Media 3: open-book quizzes on reading and group projects

and school in a context where it might have been predicted, implying that a message was received by students.

To facilitate a comparison, program characteristics are summarized in Table 3. Their relevance and some details are discussed throughout the analysis.

## **Framing Social Relations**

Social relations, as described in Chapter One, are viewed in terms of power and solidarity. In this portion of the analysis, observed patterns of relating and typical ways in which activity is constrained and promoted at the program level are described as a frame for the more detailed analyses in the next two chapters.

### **Establishing A Place Within Schools**

The relationships that teachers had with their schools and the position of the video programs are in many ways defined by how the programs came into existence because these set the stage for how the relationships would develop. Boarding High had a program that involved the most people but in some respects it has the simplest story. It was the product of a number of people simultaneously initiating activity at different locations. One man, who did not participate in courses at Boarding High, used his internship to run a short digital program in a different high school school. Meanwhile, the art teacher had been developing what she viewed as a program in fine arts and made contact with a Native artist, who was involved with the funding agency in bringing art to children on reservations. All of these various moves and the connections made between people at all three organizations resulted in the digital art program arriving at Boarding High. The college interns, who were the actual teachers of the program,

consequently had a certain degree of alienation (low solidarity and low power) from the school and from the process that got them there because they had ties to none of the organizations prior to being recruited for the Boarding program.

This alienation was demonstrated by a number of problems that occurred: The first course was never completed due to conflicts between the school's schedule and the interns' availability. During the second course, all the responsibility for managing activities were thrust upon one intern without any clarity about his position. And in the third course, the interns had no time to prepare—they did not know how to use iMovie—being told about the plan at the last minute. In each course, there was an ambiguity about who had the authority to lead activities, and only the interns and the art teacher developed a degree of solidarity. They were, however, highly constrained by time.

The events of the second course particularly demonstrate the position of interns. The interns first had to struggle to create a schedule, which in the end had only two of the three interns there at a time because the arrangements had been made without consulting them, but the intern who found himself unexpectedly in charge also had to arrange for the equipment and did not have the authority to assure its availability. He expressed frustration and embarrassment to me about the position he was in. In effect, he had all the power and responsibility for structuring the second course but was never told so, and he lacked sufficient power at the digital arts agency to obtain equipment for every

meeting. The interns were able to overcome the lack of power and solidarity within the classroom overtime: All three interns also conducted another arts program in the art teacher's classes and became increasingly comfortable with the setting, so that they took it upon themselves to have an after-school presentation of both programs' projects.

The third course (in the fall of 2002) involved a new set of interns and under the authority of a new director of the digital art organization. These interns were supervised by a graduate student intern, thus some confusion was removed, but all who had been involved in planning the program at that school were absent except for the art teacher. In each course, the interns and other visitors (when present), stopped at the office on the way in to register and get name tags. This established interns as outsiders with relatively little power. The first set of interns, who were present for the first two courses, remained in the classroom or in the area outside the classroom throughout; their connection was with the art teacher and room. The second set of interns, however, accompanied students during recording and therefore went a number of places throughout the campus. Thus the first set of interns formed solidarity with the art teacher, and the second set formed less solidarity but directly with students.

The art teacher, who described herself as one-eighth Native American but mostly Spanish, seemed unlike most of the staff I met. She had little interaction with anyone else from the school in my presence, but she—in a style I associate

with artists—elaborately described her students as excited by the project, despite the difficulty interns had in maintaining their attention. She apparently had positive relations with everyone—continually expressing solidarity (though also some distress when half the school was sent home)—but in her classroom, she had all of the authority.

Suburban High was in most ways a dramatically different program because it was designed, led, and controlled by one man, but in this it resembled the art teacher's dominion over her class. The Suburban teacher had been retiring from a local news station when the principal from another school offered him the opportunity to teach a "couple classes," but when a friend offered to have him teach four classes at the school where one son was enrolled and another would be enrolled by the time I observed, he accepted the second offer. He was in the process of completing the necessary steps to become fully accredited as a teacher while I was at the school, but he had an expertise and thus authority over the subject matter. His program was designed specifically around his previous career and his experience in running lights and audio for the children's theater that used the school's auditorium. His relationship with the school was as both teacher and parent. And he had an expertise that made him valuable in both roles. He had a strong relationship with the principal, producing video projects for her with student help. (Defending this activity to a complaining student, he claimed that this was the way to get the things they wanted.) The teacher showed high

solidarity with other teachers in the performing arts department, but tensions were evident with teachers of core subjects. He complained that “they” did not view his courses as truly academic, his lack of teaching credentials possibly aggravating the situation. Students reported that some teachers would not play the school news program and that one teacher referred to it as a “music video.” Such problems were listed and reported to the principal for resolution, further demonstrating school alliances. On the other hand, he recognized that part of the need for his courses were the need for additional electives because courses like automechanics had been abandoned. Like the art teacher at Boarding High, the Suburban teacher had created a strong program that was entirely under his direction—in part because of the peripheral status of the courses—but he also had a strong alliance with school administration.

Urban High had the most complicated arrangement because it involved three teachers with different teaching practices drawn at different times into a reform project. A representative from the reform project believed that the school administration actively prevented meaningful reform and seemed to have no hope for improvements even though a new principal had been appointed. The New Media teachers were isolated from the rest of the school, and the support from the reform was quickly dwindling, if ever the teachers felt supported by it; one teacher complained that he had not. The lack of power and solidarity within the New Media Academy and in its relations to the school was striking.

The Media 1 teacher seemed entirely on his own and overwhelmed by it. One day he came in late, carrying groceries for his cooking classes. His good intentions led to efforts for a presentation of student works on two separate occasions, but these were gradually scaled back before being abandoned entirely. He was the teacher I first spoke with at the school, and he was generous in his invitation for me to come. He always expressed optimism. He met with me and the principal to discuss permission for me to conduct my study, and other trips to the office suggested he experienced some type of administrative support, but he often seemed distracted in class. He had been teaching only five years, barely longer than the existence of the New Media Academy. In addition to teaching media, social studies, and culinary arts, a sign indicated that he ran a student organization for “gay, lesbian, bisexual, and questioning students,” but I never found the time to ask him more about it because he always seemed busy and on the verge of exhaustion. It made sense that this teacher chose to stop teaching media at the end of the school year.

The other two teachers had each other’s company in the spring of 2002, but they often seemed to be in each other’s way rather than finding ways of supporting each other. The Media 3 teacher had been teaching a long time and had been with the New Media Academy from the beginning, but the Media 2 teacher had come to the Academy later from a career in broadcasting—a career that, unlike the Suburban High teacher, was not technically oriented. This teacher

was absent for the first month that I observed, however, because he was recovering from surgery. This resulted in the English and Media classes, which shared a room, to become merged for the most part until his return.

Each teacher for the most part established class activities independently, making each the authority within their courses. The limits of this authority were apparent, however, when all productions were aborted in response to a problem with a prop gun, and concerns were expressed about the subject matter of student videos possibly being offensive to parents. The institutional constraint on the teachers' power was most directly demonstrated in the inability of teachers to set limits on enrollment or on the necessity of prerequisites.

Teachers are traditionally alone in their classrooms, but at the other two schools, other teachers and administration occasionally found reasons to visit. With the exception of covering for absences and one visit by a computer technician, no one from outside the classes ever appeared in either of the New Media classrooms. This combined with the location and condition of the classrooms to create a sense of having been forgotten. The degree of isolation of the Urban program was confirmed when a teacher from another school track, who was filling in for the Media 3 teacher one day, said that she had been brought into her academy as the media expert but had not known that the New Media Academy existed. This lends support to the assertions of the Media 3 teacher that the New Media Academy served as a dumping grounds for students who needed

another class rather than as an academy in which students could build a sense of community while engaging with academics via new media. The Academy had no identity in the school.

Perhaps the lack of connection—one expression of low solidarity—was largely true of all three programs but that it took on a more negative quality given the lack of purpose exhibited by the teacher's at Urban High. The art teacher at Boarding High and the teacher at Suburban High had used their isolation and their lack of established guidelines and practices to establish a place with distinct ideologies that positioned the program within the school. At Boarding High, the art teacher had brought real art to the students for a more meaningful self-expression and broader exposure than the Native crafts that had previously been the only art education. The teacher at Suburban High had created not only a vocational program that required five class periods a day but a student produced show that benefited the entire school—replacing the daily announcements. At Urban High, the teachers tried to adopt an ideology they never fully understood, and then in trying to make something work, dabbled in so many ideologies that they became less relevant to the school. The constraints on their freedom to create an autonomous academy as intended and the constraints that prevented coordination between teachers (such as lack of time and support) were obstacles not found at the other two schools and thus represents the most significant difference.

### Connections And Their Absences In The Classrooms

Moving the focus into the classroom, the relationship of teachers with students might be assumed to be the most influential one because the teachers are responsible for establishing the relationship, but as with all social activities, classrooms require *social cooperation* to function (Lemke, 1993), thus teachers and students create the relationship together. The teacher involved in the pilot study said he struggled because what he viewed as giving students important freedoms was viewed by the students as a weakness on his part. Lemke emphasized the need for “a common sense of the structure of the activity” (p. 4), and it was this shared sense that is frequently missing between teacher and students. The responsibility for creating a common culture in which all class members have an implicit knowledge of activity structures falls to the teacher, but too often teachers are not sufficiently conscious of the structure or the fact that it is not apparent to students. Nevertheless, teachers—consciously and unconsciously—use material environments to support or create this structure. As in the case of Urban High and to some degree Boarding High, the teachers themselves may lack a sufficient understanding of the activity structure.

One basic activity structure for classrooms is the question and answer format, elaborated upon by Lemke—with an evaluation added—in the *Triadic Dialog* (1993, p. 8). This involves a teacher question, a student answer, and a teacher evaluation with a number of optional but secondary acts before, after, and

between. The key is that “in [the Triadic Dialogue] teachers get to initiate exchanges, set the topic, and control the direction in which the topic develops. They get to decide which students will answer which questions and to say which answers are correct” (p. 11). This traditional teaching method maintains strict power relations—there is a questioner and an answerer—though expressions of solidarity could vary widely. These relations are supported in traditional classroom arrangements where all students face the instructor and only the instructor has freedom of movement. The project-based inquiry frequently promoted with video production stands in sharp contrast, being student directed and, when it is at its best, student evaluated. More supportive classrooms are typically arranged so that students sit in small groups without reference to the teacher’s desk. Traditional arrangements are obstacles to project-based activity. These structures are just two potential activity structures.

At Boarding High, there were almost no uses of the Triadic Dialogue during the video production program. It was noted only during the introductions to the program and in the graduate student’s efforts to discuss the projects at the end of the third course. These discussions did not go well, being met with uncomfortable silences. Whether the difficulty in generating answers was due to a quiet resistance to such power laden exchanges or were due to an unfamiliarity with the structure was a question I frequently pondered. In general, students were observed to be rather quiet, initiating few exchanges with the teacher. When I

presented my research project to the students, the usual indications of either attention or boredom with which I am accustomed were absent. It was not that the lack of response was totally unlike the other two schools, but the degree of non-responsiveness was extreme. The interns and I spoke briefly about it.

In the third course, students were the most vocal I had seen: The class was very large, so the teacher had hand picked students to participate, totaling only half the class, and the interns had participated much more intimately in creating the projects. I also noted, particularly among some of the girls, affect such as giggling that I was more familiar with. The interns, however, still found it difficult to communicate with students. Based on this, I would tentatively suggest the difference in this school was due to the students' culture or, in other words, their lack of familiarity with the Triadic Dialogue and similar classroom structures. It is in the analysis of student videotapes that a dramatic difference in the way students act with authorities and peers becomes visible that may more fully explain the silences during adult-led discussions.

The interns for the most part did not come in as "teachers;" they had almost no preparation and were not given specific instructions. This was most telling in the second course when the interns were entirely on their own: They gave no introduction to the program and after ample hesitation chose to show some of their own video art work as an explanation of what they were hoping students to do. In the third course, the interns were much more involved and

offered many more directions. The directions, however, were typically offered as suggestions or explanations of the technology. When I witnessed a question, it was used more to prompt activity rather than to engage in “education.” This set of interns expressed more power and more solidarity with students.

At Suburban High, the class was usually very teacher directed, and expressions of power and solidarity were normal. Particularly in the beginning, the teacher said he sought to convince students that Television Production was a serious class, requiring actual work. The teacher used a distinct and consistent activity structure that was only set aside entirely when students were practicing the uses of equipment or working on projects. The school year started off with a daily use of the structure, and increasing amounts of time was spent on projects as the year progressed. A typical day in the beginning had students reading three or four pages from text books that never left the room. Students were instructed to write something they had learned in their journals. The next phase was a derivative of the Triadic Dialogue without the question. The students read what they had written and received acknowledgment from the teacher, ranging from elaboration to an indication for the next person to speak. Then a lecture and/or media presentation would follow that elaborated on what had been read. Some form of the Triadic Dialogue was common during these. Reports about video journal articles were presented monthly.

The first student-directed activity was to practice eight camera movements: pan (turning the camera), tilt, truck (moving sideways with the camera straight), dolly (moving forward or backward), pedestal (rising up or lowering down without shifting the camera's direction), a high (above the head) mount (camera hold), a low (at waist level) mount, and an "other" mount such as leaning against something to steady the camera. When students were ready, they demonstrated and were graded on each. The teacher stressed that this was in part for the protection of his cameras, which will be discussed further in the next section. The entire first semester proceeded with these types of activities as students learned different camera techniques, lighting, and in the second semester audio. Editing was introduced at the end of the first semester, and the first of two independent student projects was done in the beginning of the second semester, initially being planned as the midterm examination. In all student-directed activities, the teacher was available but did not initiate involvement with few exceptions.

Students were responsive, the extent and manner of response becoming increasingly differentiated as the year progressed. The loss of some students and addition of others at the semester break was noticeable, but the teacher addressed the shift simply by suggesting that new students work with old students. The exchanges between students and the teacher was generally positive. Issues such as a student falling asleep in class were addressed simply by waking the student. Solidarity between teacher and students was strongest in the advanced class. Even

when the teacher became angry, such as after a camera was stolen or students acted in ways that were risky to themselves or the equipment, there was no expression of hostility from students.

Students never actively expressed a dislike or problem with the teacher in my hearing. It did become clear, however, that the teacher joked and spoke casually with some students more than others, mostly due to his familiarity with students. For instance, a few advanced students were in each of the beginning classes in the official role as teacher assistant (TA), and the girl who was the executive producer of the news show, who was also a TA in one class, frequently spoke casually and joked with the teacher. In the same class, a girl got the lead in the school play and received many remarks from the teacher about this and other issues, such as remarking on how photogenic she was. Frequently the kind of relationship the teacher had with students was initiated by students, however. One boy, who intended to continue in the advanced class and pursue an audio position on the news program, would hang around the teacher's desk when there was the freedom to do so. A difference, however, in the level of participation in the social life of the classroom emerged that reflected student ethnicity. In these ways, the teacher displayed greater solidarity with some students than others, which in turn promoted different levels of participation.

At Urban High, each of the three courses I observed had unique structures with uneven expressions of power but a consistent lack of solidarity (expressed in

two ways). Media 1 was my focal class, and I was initially pleased to see that the teacher was using a project-based approach, which as already described necessitates less power differentiation than many other structures. He assigned three projects across the semester, and students were also to create personal webpages, but I did not closely observe these efforts. The teacher presented activities using the chalkboard, an oral description, and sometimes a handout of what he expected. It was in these moments that his power as instructor was most heavily emphasized. He stressed the planning stages, getting the frustrated response from one student, “More scripts!” Throughout, the teacher expressed high solidarity but was frequently ignored by students. And when the students were expected to work, amazingly little activity occurred.

Day after day, I watched uncomfortably as students did nothing in relation to their assignments. I attempted to ask students about what they were doing—one group said they were going to do a skateboarding video as they played with a toy skateboard—but they seemed reluctant to speak with me. Generally, the only thing written on the papers in front of students was whatever the teacher had written on the board. A representative of the reform project said that one man, while documenting class work, could not take it and tried to teach when he was in the room. The teacher tried several times approaching tables and talking with students—kneeling beside the tables in the absence of extra chairs—but little changed, and most of the time he stayed busy with things he needed to do or with

students working on the computers. By the end of the semester, a sense of urgency about completing assignments arose, and there was a flurry of activity, but most of the time, there was no observable activity. On their first project, things had been different because each group was handed a camera and let go into the hallways, but I missed that class, only seeing the tapes they created. Typically, it was with relief that I left the room to go to the Studio after an hour of observation.

Things were not very different in Media 2. Because the teacher (former newsman) was absent the first three weeks, little was done, but upon his return, the class began “pitches,” during which students presented ideas. All three teachers had students do pitches at least once. The only media assignment in Media 2 was one fictional story: All students were to work on a script, whether they intended to produce it or not. Otherwise, students did “English.” Again, though, the emphasis in both advanced courses was on the planning stages, and a script or storyboard was required for access to equipment.

In Media 2, one and only one production was started. A student, who asked to be referred to as Spike (see Table B1), involved several students in his project. Somehow, he had convinced the teachers to let him begin recording even though he had not written out his ideas. When I interviewed him, he said that his purpose in doing the video was to convince the teachers that he could without a script, but production on all projects in advanced classes were halted after a prop

gun in another class raised concerns. The Media 2 teacher explained to me that they had been too ambitious, thinking they could do stories; there is a “learning curve” for teachers also, he told me. The constraint introduced in stopping all productions, however, had a devastating effect on Spike’s participation, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The Media 3 teacher was the only teacher involved in video productions in the 2002-2003 school year. There was an apparent determination in his approach despite the fact that he frequently discussed the futility of it with me. He sought projects and ideas from the internet and was convinced—until he received them and tried using them—that textbooks were the solution. After my only observation of “pitches” in the class, he talked to me about its failures. I commented that I saw some potential in one student’s comments, but he believed that the student had simply been mimicking him. He changed his approach several times, finally settling into a pattern of having students read sections of the textbook and take open book quizzes and assigning small projects for groups of students to work on at their own pace.

The teaching philosophy of the Media 3 teacher was illustrated one day when he took me to a neighboring classroom that had the entire course on the computer: The computer took attendance, gave assignments, and evaluated students so that the instructor had only to troubleshoot. What was demonstrated in this and in his relations with his students was that project-based courses gave

students the ability to work on their own—without a teacher; a teacher’s primary role was fulfilled in creating good assignments. He made uneven efforts to stimulate ideas with part of his class—promoting deeper consideration of assignments.

The Media 2 teacher, after productions were abandoned, found a way of working with students that he was comfortable with. Much of the remaining time was spent reading plays aloud and writing. His choice the following school year to continue with more standard teacher-led activities was consistent with his routine uses of power and a deemphasis on solidarity as he maintained a distancing formality. The Media 3 teacher was nearly the opposite. He was always friendly with students, deemphasizing his power as instructor when he could. He tended, however, to be formal in his discussions with students—to maintain some distance. He had still a typical stance toward students: He joked informally with them, creating moments of solidarity with some students, while he asserted his power as the teacher mostly in his grades.

The students at Urban High overwhelmingly had two basic ways of responding to teachers, regardless of the situation. They either joked or remained silent. Conversations between teachers and students were rare. The only conversations I was able to have with students, which involved having my questions briefly answered, were away from the classes—either on the phone or when we were alone. The teachers had each adopted different ways of relating

with their students, and the atmosphere was extremely difficult. The veteran Media 3 teacher was able to maintain class discussion by joking with students—by laughing at their jokes with them—but he did not recognize the few successes or potential in these moments for promoting more meaningful discussions.

In their study of internet use, Schofield and Davidson found that “the increase in autonomy that frequently accompanied Internet use mitigated [the] source of friction between students and teachers and thus contributed directly to improving their relationships” (2003, p. 76). To some extent, this was reflected in the more successful exchanges the Media 1 teacher had with students when they were working on the internet, but a similar conclusion cannot be reached about work with video cameras and editing at any of the schools. Whereas I would have expected an improvement in relations, only at Boarding High—where the interns did not have a pre-existing relationship—did teachers routinely interact with students during recording or editing sessions. Teachers and students alike seemed to have difficulty integrating the independence of video production with their usual ways of relating in school. Only in the advanced class at Suburban High did the teacher participate in production, but everyone’s roles were clearly defined. This reflected what Bernstein (1971) referred to as “positional roles” as opposed to more “personal roles,” which will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

The problems of integrating independent work into an educational setting is not unique to video production. Schofield and Davidson also found that:

Occasionally students reported frustration associated with [the] increased independence in circumstance[s] when they felt they did not get the support they needed from teachers. Further, we observed numerous instances in which students working autonomously on the Internet would clearly have benefited from a teacher's assistance either in solving a specific problem or in learning how to solve the general class of problem they faced. (2003, p. 77)

I regularly noticed instances when students could have used technical information and more generally the presence of a teacher, but the only assistance I witnessed at Urban High was calls for silence so students could record. Reilly (1998) reported that not only did the teacher he observed interact regularly with students during production, but that Reilly himself became instrumental in several productions. More importantly, I was able to witness the teacher from Reilly's study reviewing some projects with a group of middle school students during a summer program. This teacher encouraged and shaped friendly critiques. These types of exchanges were missing from all three schools, except in work at Boarding High during the third course where they were limited.

### **Equipment Access As Definitive Characteristic**

A major issue, which has only been touched on so far, is that of how the teachers asserted or did not assert their power by constraining students' access to

equipment. In Schofield and Davidson's study of internet use, “teachers adopted strategies of surveillance, limited movement to bookmarks and lists of acceptable search terms, and us[ed], or claim[ed] to use, technical means to monitor the Internet sites students visited to help control student behavior” (2003, p. 67). The issues with video are not entirely the same: They do not worry about access to uncensored materials, though a couple of male students were described as being foolish enough to record under a girl’s shirt and to then bring the videotape back to an infuriated teacher. I expected that the issue of permissions would arise—getting people’s permission to be recorded—but it did not.<sup>14</sup> Instead, the only constraints that video production elicited from teachers were about the availability and protection of equipment.

The availability of equipment was a problem at each school, but at Boarding High, there was little to be done about it. Once, one of the four cameras did not have a charged battery, forcing one camera to stay where it could be plugged in. The resolution was simply to take turns leaving the classroom. When iBooks were not available, students simply did not work, leading some students to never finish their projects. The courses were over before solutions could be considered, but at the other two schools, the issue necessitated resolution. At Suburban High, five cameras and a sign-up sheet easily prevented conflict in camera use, but the teacher intervened when students had signed up for more

---

14 At Suburban High, all students in Television Production classes had to sign a release forms at the beginning of the year, but others were never asked for such formalities.

editing time than they were allotted, freeing up the computer for other students but leading to a poor editing job for that group of students. Urban High rarely had a conflict over equipment availability, but access to cameras was generally reserved as a reward for completing the planning phase, and access was limited to the Hi-8 camcorders for Media 1 students. Only the Media 1 teacher allowed students to take cameras home. Thus in practice Urban students had the least access to equipment, and Urban teachers were the most constraining in this respect.

Theft and damage of equipment was a concern expressed and realized at both Urban and Suburban Highs but not at Boarding. Theft and damage are real problems that every school faces in one way or another. A teacher of another program spoke about how disheartening it was to have a camera stolen and how fully it prevented editing in his classes, it being their only digital camera. The camera that was stolen from Suburban High did not stop work because it was one of five S-VHS cameras, but the teacher complained to his students that the worst part was that it had to be one of them—someone who had been given access to the keys—who had done it. This in itself was an indication of the level of solidarity achieved in the program—that students as well as the teacher expressed a sense of betrayal. But funding was a problem: The program used club money to replace the camera. Most of Suburban High's equipment was purchased through the Regional Occupation Program (ROP), which another teacher said had gone

bankrupt. The teacher also worked hard to find small grants and good deals. At Urban High, the bigger problem was that students kept damaging equipment, and their funding was gone. The plans to transform the “New Media Academy” into an ROP program may have been in part to solve financial problems. Despite having similar financial concerns, however, the two schools took very different approaches to solutions.

At Suburban High, the appropriate use of equipment was routinely promoted. The teacher had students prove they could handle a camera and had them pass a safety quiz (particularly important for work in the theater) before they were allowed to use any equipment. He spoke often about protecting the equipment, joking frequently that it was more important to protect the equipment than the students, but he did not impose constraint on student access. A sign with a similarly humorous message about safety and protecting equipment hung on the door to the control room. And students in the advanced class were assigned to doing small repairs. Promotions thus dominated while constraints were used to protect equipment from non-members of the community: The equipment was locked in the classroom when it was not being used, but the teacher regularly gave students access to his keys and permitted them to go back to the storage closet, which often remained unlocked. Community membership was an important part of protecting equipment.

By contrast, Urban High teachers promoted safe use of equipment mostly with threats such as “You will have to pay for it!” But they imposed more constraints to prevent theft: Only the teachers were allowed in the closet where equipment was stored, and the closet remained locked at all times. The Media 3 teacher in particular spoke about the problems, doing so in front of students and adding to an atmosphere of distrust. He believed that if there was only one teacher using the equipment at a time, that they would be able to prevent damage because they could track who was using what. He also spoke longingly of a school in which students had to provide their own cameras. Once he reported finding one of the doors tampered with so that it would not lock but discovering it before anything was taken. In general, he spoke about things being stolen quite often, but never said specifically what had been stolen. The other two teachers did not speak about it in my presence, but all Urban teachers imposed constraint on who could use cameras and under what circumstances.

Attempts to protect video equipment from theft and damage and to assure student access to it are consistent with the general teacher-student relations. At Boarding High, access was constrained by unknown others and a distinct lack of time. No attention to promoting proper use of equipment was observed. Instead, students were given broad freedoms by program staff to do what they wanted with only rare constraints or promotions. At Suburban High, promotions dominated, and a community emerged that reinforced his efforts. The Urban High

program offered few prompts and little guidance, but teachers sought to constrain students' activities, trusting in an abstract desire for success or grades to help students focus on producing videos. This dependence on constraint despite its lack of success can be attributed to a misunderstanding of the intended reforms, which in turn seems to be a reflection of problems deeply rooted in the school.

### **Course Ideologies, Class Activities, And The Material World**

The three programs had distinct ideologies with characteristic orientations and leading activities, even when ideological conflicts prevailed. The vocational orientation of the Suburban program was unquestioned, leading to a distinct emphasis on technology that dominated in assigned activities. The attempt at reform at Urban High met a number of obstacles and conflicting ideas in its realization, but having students develop their own video projects remained the central part of activities in the observed courses.<sup>15</sup> At Boarding High, the arts orientation was enacted by simply engaging students with digital media to create art. The ideologies and conflicts in ideologies behind these characteristics were materially represented in ways that were frequently confirmed by other observations as the material world mediated the emerging ideological complexes.

---

<sup>15</sup> Media 2 is to some extent the exception because productions were halted and few had begun, but production activity dominated until they were stopped.

### **Setting A Tone**

The campuses established tones, which served as backdrops. Both Boarding and Suburban High Schools had a certain institutional, though attractive, sterility. This was contrasted at Boarding High by colorful student-made murals inside and outside the Academic and Fine Arts Buildings. Some less professional murals—resembling graffiti—were on the lunch area shelter, indicating senior class officers and assorted images. See Illustration 4 for examples. A sculpture of a Native American man in the entrance was colorless but graceful, and with the murals and recent landscaping, it demonstrated a concern with aesthetics and an availability of resources that was absent at the other schools. The windows of the art classroom further contributed color and an artistic flare, though the relative impermanence of these displays was evident and its less professional arrangement was a contrast. In all the art, the identity of the school's population was portrayed and celebrated at a material level.

The dormitories and manicured campus, however, contributed to the sense of ideological conflict. The dorms were equally, if not more, institutional as compared to the newer buildings of the “school,” but they also showed less concern for aesthetics or presenting Native cultures. I only saw into the inside of the dormitories through a video project that was not obtained for analysis, but there seemed to be a bareness inside as well as outside. The sidewalks, paved patios, flower beds, and regularly mowed grass was in sharp contrast to Native

#### Illustration 4: Boarding High’s Student-Made Murals



Still 1: Mural on the outside of the Academic Building from the unedited work of Project 15



Still 2: Mural in the Academic Building from the unedited work of Project 15



Still 3: Mural in the Academic Building from the unedited work of Project 15



Still 4: The lunch area shelter from the unedited work of Project 16

cultures, “Wicket” (see Table B1) commenting that he had never seen so much concrete. The history of the school and efforts to aid Native students was subtly embodied in these inconsistencies and in the dominance of the institution. The conflict between assimilating the youth to facilitate their “success” and preserving Native cultures by nurturing it in their youth was embodied in the material environment, but an institutional order dominated.

Suburban High, on the other hand, offered a regularity in the rows of brick buildings that indicated no conflict. At Suburban High, only the auditorium was painted—high above the entrance—with the words and image of the school

mascot. The irregularity of the trees, the larger areas separating the administrative building, auditorium, and gymnasium from the classrooms, and the occasional diagonal walkway softened the effect, but a largely sterile professionalism dominated. Student-made signs, advertising sales or student elections, were rare in the public areas. A plaque indicated that one square between buildings was the “senior quad,” but this also showed no sign of the students to which it referred, appearing more like a memorial than a functional place. Students were not materially represented.

Urban High presented neither regularity nor a specific conflict. It embodied its history in the irregularity of its buildings and a deficiency of land so common in urban schools. Different parts of the campus reflected different priorities, and some parts simply seemed to have been forgotten. The big buildings in front had fresh coats of paint and flowers growing round them, for example, while buildings toward the back were dirty and surrounded by cracked pavement. Moreover, the problems of the community were reflected in the campus. All the schools had someone posted at the entrance most of the time (though no metal detectors), but only at Urban High was the fence an honest deterrent to climbers, and the police had a constant presence only at Urban High. But Urban High was also the only school to show material resistance to the official ideology: The “Girls” above one restroom had been crossed out and replaced with “women,” and a sign that warned about crimes such as graffiti was appropriately decorated with graffiti.

The murals at Urban High were a mixture of professional ones with school slogans—including mascots, the encouragement of learning, and a “wall of history” with famous alumni—and the contributions of past mural classes, showing student participation in the quality of the art work but reflecting official ideologies in attention to issues such as smoking cessation and staying in school. These murals tended to not attract the attention of passerbys, not did they appear in videos as more than background. However, there regularly were handmade signs about current events: a luau, a pizza party, student elections, and club meetings. And as already noted, the campus always has students in it; there was a life to the campus that was rare at the other two schools.

Thus an institutional message was communicated in the material environment at Urban High—one that noted its history and aims—but it was weakened by decay and a livelier presence of students. And the institutional dominance faded away as one moved farther from the administrative building. The ethnic and class identities of students were remarked upon on the school website and were materially represented in temporary displays. The greatest conflict was in the effort by an anonymous institution to control activity: It was embodied in the fences that served to hold students in, direct their movement, and separate the school from the community. The resistance was generally subtle, observable in graffiti and the ever present student body, but it was constant.

The material environments of the three schools, then, reflected official ideologies to different extents: The Boarding High campus embodied the conflict in official ideologies that supported Native American identities but continued assimilation practices. Suburban High embodied an institutionalized professionalism. Urban High embodied a general effort to control activity, including its uneven attempts to lessen the appearance of poverty and suppress illicit activity, but it was materially contested.

### **The Presence Of Bodies In Campuses**

At all the schools, students were materially visible in their bodily presence, a presence that frequently vanished at Boarding and Suburban High Schools as bodies were effectively moved to classrooms. Nevertheless, the murals sustained a hint of the youth at Boarding High. At lunch and between classes, the students owned the grounds through their overwhelming presence at Urban and Suburban Highs. I was never present during lunch at Boarding High, but their smaller numbers and the large campus would certainly have made less of an impact as observed during the centennial celebration. Nevertheless, just as de Certeau (1986) discussed, students had mostly a transient effect, using a period during the day reserved for lunch and the minutes between classes to assert a presence on campus; the places were merely borrowed from the institution.

In one study of high school students, Hemmings focused on hallways by distinguishing a “corridor curriculum.” In hallways and lunch rooms, she found that supervision was minimal and that students structured the culture of these areas (2000, p. 5). In southern California schools, however, hallways and lunch rooms are frequently outside, broadening the area to be structured and potentially lessening the control of authorities. Places within the larger campuses afforded different activities and different social structures, but observations about how students typically used them were limited.

Overall, few differences were noted in how Boarding and Suburban High School students used their grounds, but several minor incidents at Urban High revealed distinguishing features. The first involved the fences and their role in constraining and perhaps promoting activity. One group of students were observed scaling the fences to escape, laughing as they did so. The fences kept more students within school grounds than may have remained on campus otherwise, but these boys seemed to gleefully take on the challenge that the institution had offered. This moment is significant because it is consistent with video activity, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Another incident was also revealing: One day a school “lock down,” which was in response to the discovery of a homemade bomb, had forced everyone to stay beyond the end of the school day, and a large crowd accumulated in one area because a routine exit gate remained locked. It did not become a significant problem but posed a hazard.

In general, the fences were artifacts that communicated an intent to keep people in and out of the campus and that inconvenienced people, preventing the use of shorter routes, keeping students from their cars, and sectioning off areas for no apparent reason.

A related issue concerns the way buildings were placed: Small, private areas were created that resisted observation. The Media 3 teacher more than once chased students away from the back door of the studio, and the gleeful escapees were able to climb the fence in part because they found an area where few people would see them—in the forgotten territory near the Studio. The limits on surveillance necessitated the more direct constraint of high fences. The other two schools had open fields between buildings and the perimeter of the grounds such that the possibility of being seen was stronger. These differences were consistent with observations of the relations between students and teachers: Constraint dominated at Urban High but failed to prevent damage to cameras. Teachers relied much more on promotion at the other two schools, and problems were rarer. Strategies of surveillance as described by Foucault (1980) were implemented more thoroughly at these two schools such that less effort was needed in controlling students.

### **Potential Messages**

The location of classrooms and the symbolic meanings of these locations were also consistent with observations. Urban High's New Media classrooms were separated from one another, and particularly the Studio was isolated. (See Appendix C, Map 4.) The potential message of disregard by the administration is supported by administrative actions that disregarded reform efforts toward an Academy. By contrast, the television production classroom at Suburban High was centrally located in "Room 1" with a music composition classroom on one side and the administrative offices, the theater, and the rest of the classrooms off in different directions. (See Appendix C, Map 2.) This compels television production to be part of the school. Similarly, the art classroom at Boarding High, though not centrally located, looked on to the central quad, facing a dormitory and near the student building. It had a degree of separation but was not off in a corner of the campus, away from well traveled paths. These locations facilitated a connection to the rest of the school.

The presence or lack of material representation of student identity was an issue within classrooms as well as on the campuses. The students in the Boarding High art classroom were noticeably reserved during the video program, but they were materially present in their art work and in Native icons around the classroom. At Suburban High, the walls had official "ROP" (Regional Occupational Program) posters, a handmade poster created for a career day, an array of more

personal pictures including pictures of grandchildren, newspaper clippings, and a “Star Trek” poster, and numerous functional schedules and signs. Both classrooms had walls that were nearly covered with “decorations,” information, and tools. Boarding High had materials that were more personal to students, but Suburban High offered a Tech identity that included humor, “Star Trek,” and a great deal of technical equipment. That “The X Files” was shown most Fridays—the down day—was no doubt entertaining to students, but may have helped communicate aspects of the Tech identity that was not attractive to everybody, especially given the lack of recognition to the roles gender and ethnicity have and do not have in the mass media.

Urban High classrooms, being a near opposite to these, had very little on the walls of either classroom. The Media 1 classroom had posters about social studies and the equipment for cooking but nothing that represented either media or student ethnicities. The studio seemed like a warehouse in its size and uses, though a set of hand prints around the door, a couple posters about standards, and a poster about a video contest marked the existence of a class with students. Both rooms maintained their institutionally designated purposes, giving the Media Academy a similar status as the students. “Spaces, too, imbue and are imbued by the kinds of persons who frequent them” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 127), but a reading of these walls suggests mostly an absence, which is consistent with the observed disconnect between students and school.

The typical model of desks lined up in rows facing the chalkboard, according to Sommer and Becker, implicitly tells students to look straight ahead and ignore everyone but the teacher (1974, p. 75), and the lack of this arrangement at Urban High contributed to the difficulty the teacher had in leading class discussions. The large, round tables were ideal for group work in many ways, though they were a little too large and they definitely took too much of the room, but they made it impossible for all students to comfortably look at the chalkboard and hindered the teachers efforts at maintaining their attention. The art classroom at Boarding High addressed these two needs by having two separate areas, using the tables that faced her desk as the area for structured class activities and the other tables for projects. The Suburban teacher rearranged the student tables. Most of the time, fitting his teacher led activities, they were in rows facing forward. Twice he changed them to form a square, which he said was to give a little variety, but this arrangement clearly facilitated the introduction of the audio equipment during one such arrangement. When I once visited the advanced class the following year, the entire room had been rearranged, and the tables were arranged to facilitate group work. If the arrangement had been this way the previous spring, some of the issues arising in group projects, discussed in Chapter 3, may have been resolved.

Schwebel and Cherlin (1972) found that teachers were not taught about seating issues and that they did not discuss them but that they used similar

strategies—particularly that of “achieving classroom control” through the strategic placement of disruptive students (p. 548). This was not prevalent at any of the schools, possibly because Schwebel and Cherlin had studied elementary schools rather than high schools. One exception was when a substitute instructed a disruptive student to sit in a particular place. The Media 3 teacher returned for a moment from the sporting event he was leading and told her that he did not like where he was sitting because things had been stolen from back there. This suggests an awareness of seating but a different set of priorities.

The placement and use of teacher desks seemed to reflect the level of authority presented by the teacher: The teachers in Urban High’s Studio unevenly used their desks and did not have items on them to assert their ownership, but students were not permitted to sit at the teacher desks, in line with the formality they maintained when talking with students. In the Media 1 classroom, the teacher’s lack of asserting authority was reflected in the freedom students enacted in using his desk. At Suburban High, beginning students never sat at either of the teacher’s desks (he had two) at the beginning of the school year, but as students had greater autonomy in classroom activities—because they were working on their projects—the desks were more likely to be used. At times the teacher easily and effectively reclaimed his desk, with the student’s use seeming to be unimportant. One video shot recorded such an exchange. Thus, particularly at Suburban High, the uses of the teacher’s desks reflected membership in the

community without threatening the teacher's authority. Perhaps the existence of two desks contributed to these dynamics.

The use of places and movement in classrooms provided evidence of relations and their changes. Particularly at Suburban High, there was a gradual change in beginning classes from students going to their seats and staying there to sitting at the anchor desk, the teacher's desk, and the areas on the edges. (See Appendix C, Map 3.) This shift was not related to the particular activities but reflected the sense of entitlement students seemed to have: The students who identified themselves as members of the Tech community (as witnessed in discussion) moved more freely around the classroom and sat more frequently away from the rows of tables. At Urban High, the movement away from the main part of the classroom in the Studio seemed to reflect the opposite—the desire of students to resist class participation. In the Media 1 classroom, there were few places for students to go, but the occasional use of the teacher's desk was more like the uses in Suburban High. These differences reflect the different meanings of the places away from student seats. At Suburban High and in the Media 1 classroom, some students moved toward the action, while as in the Studio, some students moved away from class activities.

### **Affordances For Video Production**

The material environments also mediated video production activity. At Suburban High, the classroom accommodated a news program, but for many non-news projects, it was too constraining. The grounds were useful when students wanted a relatively undistinguished setting, but many students left the school to find better settings and items such as cars that could not be used at school. Urban High had a similar problem. The studio was large and afforded the existence of sets, but the sets were incomplete and sound was a huge problem: Everyone else in the room had to be silent when someone was recording, and the buzzing of machines made the balcony unusable. The production of dramas in the Studio were nevertheless possible because of the size of the room and artifacts acquired for sets.

The Media 1 room, on the other hand, had fewer affordances. Not only did the acoustics create a constant, chaotic noise, but it lacked space for movement. Partially because the teacher encouraged it and partially because the room afforded it, many students did cooking shows for their “How To” videos. There was even a table with a mirror on top, designed so that classes could observe what a cooking instructor was doing, which facilitated the recording of cooking videos. At Suburban High, one group did a cooking show and had to arrange to use the appropriate classroom and to get all the supplies on their own. The

frequency of cooking videos at Urban High was clearly related to the facilities that were available.

One technical problem that was common across schools is that it is very difficult to have four people around a computer for editing and have everyone participate. Group projects for this reason pose certain difficulties that were handled in one of two ways: Either one person took over the process or the person with the mouse became a tool of the group as various instructions were offered. Many students at all schools were cut out of the process in this way, though it often appeared that they had dropped out. None of the teachers addressed the problem. The Suburban teacher merely advised people in selecting partners or choosing to work alone to remember who and how people had contributed on the first project. The difficulty was partly resolved by the positions—director, talent, etc.—that students were to officially occupy, but tension was witnessed more than once regarding the ownership of the editing process. One intern at Boarding High worked intimately with her students and was able to maintain more equal participation, and another intern directed students sufficiently that all students participated but had less sense of project ownership. None of the interventions used by the interns fully had the desired effect, perhaps explaining why other teachers did not try to have an impact. Desktop computers, however, were more conducive to group work than laptops. The arrangement of the Boarding High art classroom became significant in the editing process. The project tables were ideal

for students to gather around because they were taller and open on all sides, but they lacked electrical plugs, thus when the iBook batteries were not sufficiently charged, editing became more difficult. When only two students were in a group and interns acted in a more hands-off manner, the classroom tables were used quite effectively. Perhaps a different design of the editing arrangements would have further enabled group editing.

### **Participation Of Production Equipment As Mediated By Programs**

The participation of the cameras and accessories offers a more complex story and acts most clearly in relation to course ideologies and project assignments.

Boarding High, in the provision of camcorders rather than larger cameras, no accessories, and little access, promoted more exploratory searches for images. The other school at which the Digital Studio had led courses had produced projects with more planning—each having a plot of sorts. This perhaps reflected a greater cultural engagement with video or a different approach taken by the interns. They also had greater access to the camcorders, which afforded more involved work. The lack of audio equipment and time prevented an involved engagement with sound, usually addressed at both schools with the use of music.

Only one group at Boarding High was observed to assert structure on their recording activities, showing students escaping the school, but they never did the editing. For the rest of the projects, no goals were expressed or visible in their

unedited work. During the first course, the director's attempts at the class level to stimulate planning were unsuccessful and the few attempts observed by interns yielded only ideas too grand for the time allotted. Video *art* was not part of students' experiences. The students' lack of familiarity with camcorders and video art plus the ease of taking camcorders around the campus encouraged projects that consisted of images composed into artistic music videos.

At Suburban High, the large cameras as well as the ideological preference for images produced with tripods, led to a different use of the camera. When students did more exploratory projects, there was less movement with the camera. One interesting exception to this was a student who borrowed a camera to take home: He carried the camera on his bicycle and recorded in a manner that undoubtedly would have been viewed as too risky to the camera if the teacher had known. The inverse concern about having images that did not shake received greater attention at Suburban High and was less of a problem with the big cameras. The cameras' greatest affordances—remaining still while it passively recorded the action around it—dominated camera activity.

Urban High also had small camcorders, but fitting the ideology of using scripts, the control of the equipment in the advanced classes was so great—after a lot of damage to equipment had already occurred—that the cameras usually remained atop a tripod. They also used external microphones and sometimes lights, which forced a different use of the camera. The beginning class on the

other hand was given a great deal more freedom with the cameras and did not have access to many of the accessories. The way the cameras were used depended mostly on location. Some projects—such as the cooking videos—were shot in the classroom and always used a tripod with few if any zooms, pans, or other movements. Those who left the classroom rarely used tripods and tended to use more locations. In these projects, camera operators sometimes interacted with the activity in front of the camera, while they never did when the camera was on a tripod.

At all schools, regardless of the type of camera used, the camera afforded greater freedom and some degree of increased power. Students used the cameras to move around the building, which frequently was without a specific goal. Once at Suburban High, a student asked if he needed a hallpass, and the teacher answered that having one of his cameras should be sufficient; the camera was a universal hallpass. Similarly, the excuse of conducting interviews mediated how students related to one another and with staff. The degree to which the camera participated in social relations is, however, best considered by looking at their recordings of their activity. In observations, the amount of equipment used was meaningful: As students used more equipment, such as tripods, microphones, and lights, they were less able to engage with people; the camera operators became recorders of events rather than participants in events because the technology dominated. The equipment available was largely consistent with the ideologies

being promoted. The result was that the most interesting video projects—in terms of research—were the ones with the least planning and least equipment. Of course, these projects tend to be the least acceptable in typical high school video production programs.

### **Chapter 3: Video Projects and Their Students**

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the process of video production classes in high schools. Chapter 4 will turn to social relations as revealed in the videos, but the topic of this chapter is the meanings that students *intended* to convey and their success in communicating them as they are mediated by courses. The amount of structure and types of learning opportunities were dramatically different in courses, but all students had the common experience of significant exposure to television. As such, the edited and unedited videos are interpreted as an indication of the internalization process—a process of developing communication via video with little reference to where the “learning” happened.

Student video projects, however, are products of specific activities within specific contexts and the histories brought by their participants, and though student-made videos are being explored as a way of investigating the educational contexts, the video projects do not display the specifics of assignments or the manner in which students worked when the camera was not running. The first section, therefore, focuses on the programs and describes the videos in relation to these contexts to consider how development (and lack thereof) is specific to the courses. The second section is about student trajectories as seen in student participation, which demonstrates the clearest changes over time. In the third section, the salient aspects of video and their meanings are discussed. The final

sections of the chapter then examine one group from each school in detail. Appendix A presents a detailed description of course assignments. A list of the students, the projects discussed, and relevant characteristics is presented in Appendix B.

### **Program Ideologies In Action**

#### **Assignments And Preparation**

Student videos were produced most immediately in response to course assignments, which posed constraints in diverse ways. Assignments varied in terms of the required genres, project length, production time, number of participants, roles of participants, and specific techniques. Suburban and Urban Highs had some similar assignments—assignments that appear to be typical of video production courses—but the ways in which the production process was structured and the teacher’s expectations about the finished products remained diverse. Most of the constraints imposed by assignments were consistent with the dominant ideologies, but evidence of alternate ideologies was also present.

One characteristic that varied across courses was the affordances for and meaning of practice with cameras. Suburban High gave students time to practice but with specific constraints. As a vocational program, the course displayed its ideological focus on technology and technique with multiple assignments

requiring demonstrations of particular camera uses. Students were encouraged and given sufficient time to practice, but the activities were narrowly defined. Boarding High's affordances for practice, on the other hand, were relatively unconstrained. Only in the first course was there a specific practice assignment, but most students did whatever they chose. This lack of constraints enabled students to infuse practice with their own meanings and to incorporate practice into the "real" camera work. At Urban High, however, "practice" was specifically discouraged. All the camera work was expected to be project based, though the Media 2 teacher had reportedly worked on non-project based shots the previous semester. The Media 3 teacher specifically said that he did not want students "practicing" their projects with the camera, placing the emphasis on activity in front of the camera as he encouraged rehearsals before obtaining a camera.

Two types of *practice* are distinguished apart from *real* camera work. Teachers promoted practice when they established time and access to equipment for evaluation-free activity that was not expected to result in a product. Thus the absence of evaluation or expected product define *official* practice activities. Boarding High had a distinct shortage of time that precluded much official practice, but the nature of the course was essentially one of providing students with the opportunity for evaluation-free activity. Nevertheless, a product was expected. Suburban High by far provided the most official practice time—highly constrained as it was—and Urban High provided none, communicating multiple

messages about why. The message that was consistent with the values of the reform project and most prevalent in Media 1 was that video activity should always be meaningful and thus purposeful: The projects themselves were practice. The two advanced courses contained other messages, however, about a distrust of students and a need to protect the equipment from theft and damage. Practice was viewed as students wasting both material resources (tapes and access to equipment) and time. The absence of official practice time is thus enhanced by a consideration of the other type of practice: *off-task activities*.

Off-task activity with video cameras can be viewed as useful in the sense that it provides additional practice and an exploration of a wider range of camera uses. It can also be viewed as “horseplay.” At Urban High, off-task activity was strongly discouraged, though not evenly across courses. Access to equipment in all three courses was dependent on having “pitched” a clearly defined project. The Media 1 teacher furthered this assertion of frivolity in one instance by trying to reason with a group of students that needing a couch was not an adequate reason to check out a camera for the weekend, but when off-task material appeared on tape, he was never observed to comment on it. In this course, camera work was never supervised. In the other two courses, however, students were not allowed to take cameras off campus and activity was far more supervised. They authentically had a problem with equipment being damaged, but particularly the Media 3 teacher adopted the strategy of preventing damage through additional controls

over access rather than promoting greater responsibility among students—the strategy the Suburban teacher employed. Off-task activity—and specifically practice with the camera in Media 3—were not acceptable. The constraints on practice were thus prevalent at Urban High, particularly in the advanced classes.

These constraints were non-existent at Boarding High even when, in Course 3, interns participated in all activity. The set of unedited video available from Course 3 shows considerably less off-task uses of the camera, being always in the presence of an intern, but there was some. Interns, program directors, and the art teacher were never observed to constrain camera uses in real time or in unedited video. The art teacher's constraint reached its height with her call to departing students, "No civil disobedience!" At Suburban High, there were similarly few constraints imposed directly by the teacher to limit off-task activity, but the time allotted for projects and lack of other affordances (i.e. activities to record) imposed a less direct constraint.<sup>16</sup> One student is known to have taken a camera home for no particular reason—with the teacher's knowledge of its lack of purpose—and the videotape showed mostly "play," indicating a certain experimentation with camera uses that resembled the unsupervised activity at Boarding High and in the pilot study (Beaty, 1998). The teacher thus showed

---

<sup>16</sup> For the couple weeks that the Suburban High drill team practiced during the class period, cameras frequently turned toward the girls, activity that the teacher jokingly supported. This activity stood in contrast to the usually empty campus.

some indications of valuing off-task activity. Future research could specifically consider the value of “practice” or “play” for student development.

In the current study, the affordances for practice were found to be consistent with the overall climate of the courses. Boarding High, wanting to introduce digital media as a creative medium, imposed the fewest constraints: The only real constraint was time, resulting in the inability of students from the first course to complete their projects and leading in the last course to interns contributing frequent suggestions and adding some finishing touches, such as credits. Creativity was promoted instead through examples of other high school and college students’ projects. At Suburban High, the main projects were required to include specific features, thus maintaining the technological emphasis and encouraging creativity and meaningfulness only as secondary concerns.

Urban High, as described in the previous chapter, displayed shifting ideologies, but in the constraints imposed on projects, the program remained faithful to the reform: The greatest requirements were in the planning stages, therefore stressing the meanings to be expressed in the projects. No technological requirements were made (with minor exceptions in Media 3). The greatest problem was that too many students never got to work on an actual project and even fewer with the camera due to requirements. The emphasis on traditional literacies—which were not these students’ strength—and insufficient support and interaction became obstacles to the motivating influence of working with cameras.

The assigned genres imposed less consistent constraints. The greatest difficulty posed by the Boarding High project was in the students' lack of familiarity with video as art; it did not contradict the program's agenda but became an obstacle to it, given the limited time. Most of the completed projects looked like artistic music videos, which are the only example of short "art" videos in the main stream media. In the third and most successful course, the interns provided concrete guidance in selecting material to record and themes for uniting them. Nevertheless, several of the students chose to drop out of the project.

By contrast, the genres at Suburban High were familiar to students, though the two projects reflected opposite extremes in genre constraint: A commercial was the only option for the first project while the second was a choice from nine genres. The first project was also constrained by a 58 second length requirement, while the second was permitted to be up to five minutes. In so doing, self-expression and creativity was promoted in the final project through a reduction in constraints, having been encouraged previously only through rare comments and the slogan, "Think outside the box." A clarity of message was required of both projects but little discussion was given to how to create this clarity. Thus the shift from one assignment to the next and the expectation of clarity did not represent the dominant agenda but rather acted as a nod to other ideologies.

The assigned genres at Urban High reflected the experimentation of the teachers and the Media 3 teacher's attempt to adopt what instructors from other

schools had used. In Media 1, students were given a great deal of freedom in interpreting assignments, and since only one project was edited all semester, the emphasis came to be on the process of planning and recording. The attempt in advanced courses during one semester to have students do fictional videos was viewed by the teachers as disastrous, and they gave all appearances of being relieved when production was halted. One reason they expressed was that students all wanted to do stories with violence, drugs, unwanted pregnancies, or other subjects with which the teachers were embarrassed to be connected, and they had legitimate concerns about the potential reaction of parents and staff. The potential of self-expression became a threat to teachers' standing in the school because the "selves" students wished to express were unacceptable. In essence, the teachers increasingly sought to constrain the extent to which the world of their students entered the classroom, the opposite of what Goodman (2003) has sought in video production. During the next semester, Media 3 included a variety of mainstream assignments, but the teacher expressed dissatisfaction with each, planning in the end to stick with news items because the others were too "silly." When I spoke with him and then visited at the end of the next semester, however, it was evident that he had tried something different again—videos about historical events using only still photographs for the last assignment—and was still not satisfied. Though the Media 3 teacher made a connection with the Varsity Television website and had some student projects posted there, he again sounded

relieved that a vocational instructor would be taking over.

### Finished Projects And Their Topics

As a result of existing constraints and promotions, a variety of video projects were produced and “finished” to different extents. Table 4 presents the number of projects from each course that were observed and copied for analysis. The first characteristic of note concerns the proportion of edited projects to be completed. If the success of a program were judged solely on the ability of students to complete their projects, the third course at Boarding High, with one hundred percent of the projects being finished (all three of them), would easily be judged as best, but of course, not all students who started working on the projects stayed with them until they were completed.

**Table 4: Numbers of Video Projects Observed and Obtained by Course**

Course	Projects Observed	Edited Projects Observed	Projects Obtained
Boarding High, Course 1	4	0	0
Boarding High, Course 2	4	2	1
Boarding High, Course 3	3	3	1
Suburban High, Beginning TV Prod	20	11	4
Suburban High, News Program	18	10 aired	0
Suburban High, other projects	7	5	1
Urban High, New Media 1	22	1	7
Urban High, (Adv) New Media 2 and 3	18	9	2
Total	96	41	16

Clearly, it is not a simple matter to complete projects. Sometimes, it is the fault of students who by choice or distraction do not finish. Examples of this existed at each school. Often, however, the fault is a technical one, such as in a hard drive crashing at Suburban High or the inability to obtain access to equipment at Boarding and Urban Highs. But most of the time, a fragile interest in video was confronted by unfortunate or neglectful circumstances such that the students seemed to simply wander off. At Urban High, students literally wandered off as they snuck or strolled out of the classroom. The problem of students not completing projects, which has implications for pedagogy to be considered in Chapter 5, interfered with my intent to compare edited with unedited video work. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that videos at both Suburban and Urban Highs were lost and that some members of a working group would volunteer their work while others in the group would not.

The topics students chose were generally consistent with their assignments; at Suburban High, two of the “commercials” were actually public service announcements, but these slight genre violations were not commented upon. And many similarities in topics can be found across schools despite the level of diversity: Students showed an interest in music, skateboarding, and parody at each school. Cameras were used to tease and promote interaction at each school, though Boarding High was the only school where much of this activity was recorded. At both Suburban and Urban Highs, projects were done on and off

campus, and automobiles played significant roles. While the number of cooking shows at Urban High certainly reflects the location and affiliations of Media 1, one cooking show was also recorded at Suburban High, thus the topic is not noticeably rare. Multiple projects about drunk driving were also completed, reflecting the topics' applicability to assignments and the relevance for students.

The difference that is most salient to the ensuing analysis is that only at Boarding High did students focus on the material environments. At all schools, students conducted mini-dramas, interviews, and performances, but only at Boarding High did students record murals, displays, and other objects with any frequency. At Boarding High, there was some sort of focus on the material environment in every project, while such occurrences were rare at the other two schools. The nature of the assignments, the environments of the schools, and the nature of student-school relations are all implicated as collectively contributing to this difference. The program at Boarding High promoted a material orientation while the other programs did not: Art, particularly as taught in most schools, tends to be visual and object oriented. The program also afforded students the freedom to move around, experiment, and seek out what was interesting. The constraints on time, on the other hand, prevented elaborate productions, and other students, who might have been involved, tended to be busy—a constraint that did not entirely prevent interaction. The fact, however, that students' identities were embodied in artistic school displays and classroom art while

absent in the displays at the other two schools is significant. Both artistry and meaning are implicated as attracting student interest.

Future research could specifically seek evidence about the meaning of school displays for students by assigning art videos at multiple schools selected for their different environments. To some extent, however, additional evidence has already been collected: First, in pilot data (Beaty, 1998) collected in the South Bronx in an after-school club, students also showed an orientation toward the material environment. Because students usually worked on their videos after school, there were few activities to record, but the openness of assignments allowed students to express their interests in the vocational training they were receiving by seeking out its locations and tools. Their focus on the material environment is attributed to the lack of other interesting subjects, the encouragement to explore, and the interest students had in the tools they were learning to use.

The evidence that best approximates the ideal study is in seven projects created through the digital art agency's involvement at a different school. This other school resembled Suburban High on the physical level—having many institutional buildings and few displays of any sort outside the classrooms. Although less about the context is known, these projects were quite different from the Boarding High projects: They each involved at least a vague plot revolving around one or more characters. The edited projects showed far more evidence of

planning. People were the focus, not objects or places, and only one was set to music. It should be noted that the interns were different and so was the class subject, but this reinforces the conclusion that the context as a whole is significant to the video that is produced.

### **Official And Unofficial Evaluations**

Evaluations, whether they are in the more private form of tests or the more public form of oral feedback during production and viewing, promotes particular activity rather than constraining it. Often, it is the knowledge that an evaluation is coming that promotes the desired activity, such as in the tests of hand held motions or specific shots at Suburban High, but ideally, evaluations promote improvements on future projects. The three programs used a variety of evaluations, and the seriousness of each was generally a negotiation between instructors and students.

The Boarding High program had no formal evaluation. This meant that there were no consequences for students who chose not to participate, and it sustained a sense that the program was simply an introduction to digital media. One activity that worked against the experimental nature of the course took place only in the first course: Students were required to do the tutorial in the iMovie program. The problem of four students and one intern clustered around a lap top was actually the least of the problems as students expressed their complete boredom with glazed eyes and a tendency to wander away. In the second course,

the intern who had by default become the lead intern expressed great relief at not having to do the tutorial again. But the second course also did not promote even informal evaluations because they interacted very little with the students during production and decided to publicly view the two finished projects with non-video projects from another program, thus limiting the discussion about the work. In this course, activity was promoted instead through additional display of projects by interns and other students. Only in the third course was evaluation integrated into the activities: Interns worked closely with students, promoting activity through questions and suggestions, and the graduate-student intern who led the course attempted a discussion about the meanings and methods of improving videos after viewing each project. The intern had little success, however, in promoting discussion.

The Suburban High teacher evaluated individual student activity with tests of text book material and its application to video work. He provided clear, objective criteria that was not discussed or contested. The criteria were generally oral and written. The video projects were similarly guided by clear, written criteria, but the assessments were of groups rather than individuals. Work on these projects consumed more time and was less structured. Traditional tests were truly private, while the evaluations of technical work and projects was partially public. The actual grades were not public information, but feedback was publicly given. During viewings, whether as part of a test of techniques or a larger project,

the teacher offered specific criticisms, usually commenting on something good and pointing out the characteristics that were missing or flawed. There was little time devoted to this feedback, however, and there was never a general discussion. Instead the teacher had students evaluate projects via a form that was handed directly to students. These forms offered a rubric with all the criteria listed and space for comments. The criteria and estimation based on it were public, though not contested, and the actual scores students received were kept private.

The evaluations at Urban High were uneven. In Media 1, evaluation was secondary, almost non-existent. The teacher led discussions of project pitches and video work to provide a public forum for evaluation, but these were typically chaotic. His attempts to speak with groups tended to fall flat. The classes were, however, successful in *promoting* critical thinking through these discussions, even if the promotion was missed by many students. At the end of the semester, the teacher had students calculate their own grades based mostly on how much work was completed rather than by how well it was done. No other formal evaluation was given. The Media 2 teacher had students pitch ideas and sought to engage students in improving them, but he offered no feedback for video work and focused increasingly on English assignments as the semester progressed. The Media 3 teacher graded and returned open-book quizzes of technical information but never discussed the material after the first couple of weeks. He also attempted pitches and discussions, but there was no evidence of how projects were graded

and no public viewings of finished projects. The open-book quizzes promoted reading and learning about technical information, but evaluation in all three courses played a minor role.

Formal evaluations in the form of grades has a utilitarian value in that it communicates the value of an activity. Every activity at Suburban High seemed to receive a grade, and this contributed to the seriousness with which students approached their work. The lack of evaluation at Boarding High permitted the students who were not as interested to withdrawal from the activity so that those who were interested could participate more fully. This self-selection was in response to and an adaptation to the scarcity of time and access to equipment. At Urban High, the general disconnect between students and school was neither furthered nor lessened by the invisibility of evaluations.

At all the schools, I was disappointed about the lost opportunities for students to develop critical thinking via meaningful evaluative discussions of video at different stages in production. Reilly (1998) describes the class reviews of video work he observed, and I had the opportunity to observe the same instructor in a summer course. In these discussions, the teacher would promote ways of questioning and seeing that could promote critical thinking—particularly if sustained over many projects. In all the situations I observed, however, the arrangement of space<sup>17</sup> and lack of time were obstacles to meaningful discussions.

---

17 The arrangement of rooms limited class discussions in all classes because students did not face one another and the teacher's authority was accentuated in his position in each context.

The lack of public viewings was also a disappointment. Goodman (2003) discusses public viewings and the transformation students undergo in the process. Showing student work to wider audiences creates a powerful message about the value of their work. This was evident in the student news program at Suburban High: Once the show began to be aired, students' enthusiasm flourished. The Media 1 teacher attempted such public showings twice—intended to include parents and guests—but the obstacles he encountered were too great: As previously described, he seemed overwhelmed and unsupported, and his students' projects were incomplete at the scheduled times. At Boarding High, finished videos were presented in two of the courses, but again, obstacles undermined the viewings. The first showing I was unable to observe, but its importance was diminished by being after school, combined with a display of other art, and only for participants. The showing in the last course was held during class with the non-participating students prevented from watching but noisily occupying one side of the room, and the videos were shown on a lap top, limiting their visibility. None of these circumstances communicated to students that their projects were important. In both courses, interns tried to convey this importance, but as in Media 1, they faced too many obstacles.

---

Acoustics were also a big problem; students were difficult to hear. One potential solution would have been to hold discussions in a smaller, more intimate room, and perhaps with only portions of the larger classes.

Across programs, evaluation and the lack of evaluation communicated dominant ideologies and the various contradictions and confusions in them. The teacher at Suburban High maintained a technological and individualistic focus despite also promoting other values such as team work. The differences between promotions in the beginning courses as compared to the advanced classes were enormous and reflect an emphasis on learning about all aspects of video production in the beginning courses as compared to the specialization of the advanced students. The inconsistencies at Urban High reflect the difficulties instructors had in adopting the ideology of the reform program in a school with too few supports and too many contradictions. The program at Boarding High had similar difficulties, but the strength of purpose in the art teacher's usual conduct and the interns' sheer presence gave greater coherence to the program. A characterization of these differences is presented in Table 5 as a summary of programs to facilitate comparison, though these are oversimplifications.

**Table 5: Summary of Influences On Student Activity In Each Program**

	<i>Boarding High</i>	<i>Suburban High</i>	<i>Urban High</i>
Constraint on general student activity	low	high	medium
Constraint on video characteristics	low	high	medium
Constraint on practice	low	medium	high
Constraint on access to equipment	medium	low	high
Time constraint on production	high	medium	low
Promotion in formal evaluations	low	high	medium
Promotion in discussions about video	medium	medium	low

## **Student Trajectories**

The students of the three programs brought personal histories and affiliations to the classrooms that resulted in distinct differences in their activities. Though rarely visible in the videos, student participation in the production process varied quantitatively and qualitatively. Many differences in participation related to program ideologies. All can be related to power and solidarity and the way social relations mediated the program constraints and promotions. Variation in student participation is the most overt indication of development, though the development most visibly concerns engagement and identity rather than “cognition.”

### **The Ownership Of Projects And The Meaning of Collaboration**

Video production requires a level of social interaction that is rarely imposed in other courses and that poses problems for traditional educators. In essence, video production is never done in isolation. Even in the few projects that were done by students who chose to work alone, they did not entirely work alone: Other people acted, ran the camera, or helped in some capacity in all projects. Theoretically, people could work on a video entirely by themselves, but even then their activity would be structured by the equipment they used (and had available), the environment that was available to them, and the genres they employed. In the

observed courses, however, no project involved only one active participant. This complicates evaluation for instructors and frames the analysis of development.

The nature of school, as opposed to work, demands the evaluation of individuals, asserting pressure on teachers to use forms of evaluation, i.e. tests of vocabulary, that yield clear, individually based criteria, demonstrating what students are taking away with them (Glick, 1995). Yet such tests are not clearly appropriate to the context of video production because the production process conflicts with this essentially individualistic bias. Tests, in effect, serve to negotiate the institutional requirement of individual assessment. Suburban High, however, did not have tests for advanced students; their ability to perform particular, highly defined roles in the production of a group project permitted individual assessments while remaining true to vocational practices. Beginning students were expected to become acquainted with all aspects of production, thus tests—written and hands-on—measured individual “knowledge” of diverse activities without measuring whether students could *use* the information in production.

This negotiation with institutional constraints does not, however, facilitate the effort of defining development. Newman, Griffin, and Cole (1989) sought to overcome the individualistic bias of traditional psychological approaches by viewing “cognitive change” as a change in activity involving other people and the

tools within the context. Therefore an analysis of “development” is initiated with an examination of how student participation overtly changed.

Students found a number of ways of working together and received different levels and types of structure for this collaboration. The most obvious structure was in the level of role differentiation expected and acted upon. Bernstein (1971) has made a salient distinction in the way power relations are structured: “Positional roles” provide the more rigid structure where individual participation is governed by positions such as teacher and student or director, camera operator, and editor. “Personal roles” are based on the qualities a person brings to the activity, requiring more negotiation and flexibility. Positional roles are most prevalent in the working class, being rooted in material class differences. All the schools, as is typical, positional roles dominated in teacher-student relations—the Media 1 teacher having the most personal relations with students—but the roles students had among themselves varied widely.

The Media 1 teacher at Urban High never suggested that groups assign duties, and rarely were clear roles distinguished. The focal group shared duties more freely than they would have if their roles had been formally assigned. More than one group had someone from outside the group run the camera for them while they did the “real” work in front of the camera, however. At Boarding High, there was some effort by interns in all courses to have students each take a turn with the camera and with editing. Suburban High required the most clearly

distinguished roles in productions by having students formally select roles. For the most part, these roles were taken seriously and used to resolve disagreements.

Another strong difference that arose between projects was in the degree to which a project was “owned” by an individual or group. Ownership was clearest in the activity of one student at Urban High, referred to as Spike. Spike was the only student to have a project in production in Media 2. A number of students worked on the project, but in the manner of production and speech, it was Spike’s project. Other students offered suggestions, but Spike was the one to make decisions. In Media 3 the following semester, Spike used footage recorded by two other students during football games and again did a project that became *his*, despite it officially belonging to the three of them. On the other hand, the focal group from Media 1 seemed to work as a team in all aspects, taking different roles as necessary but working together to make decisions and pursue particular goals on all three projects—despite some changes in who participated. When necessary, they worked with only a portion of the group, but throughout, despite considerable joking, no conflict over project ownership or direction was observed. The consistent part about production at Urban High was that the ownership of projects was negotiated seamlessly. At Suburban High, however, the ownership of projects was often observed to be contested and negotiated, and at Boarding High, expressions of ownership were entirely absent.

At Boarding High, no one completed more than one project, so potential change over time was constrained. The most common change was to cease participation, further evidence of the lack of ownership generally expressed by students. In the focal project by Wicket and Jerome (see Tables B1 and B2), both the unedited video and observations of the editing process reveal that the production process was shared throughout, though moments of negotiation were prevalent. For example, Jerome is heard (in the fourth shot of the second day) to yell jokingly, “Okay, give me the camera, bitch.” The capturing process was shared uniquely, with one student controlling it from the computer and the other from the camera. They appeared to be equally involved in production, but there was a tendency for Wicket to take the lead. Wicket clearly experimented with camera techniques and encouraged Jerome to, and Wicket’s discussion of the project’s meanings were far more elaborate. Their participation, however, remains comparatively stable, being shared and undifferentiated as they moved through the stages of production.

By contrast, some of the work from Suburban High demonstrates the complications of changing group composition (See Table B1), distinguished roles, and varying levels of participation. In response to the “commercial” assignment, Valic, Catherine, Pablo, and Ricardo produced what was really a public service announcement about drunk driving (Project 4 in Table B2) while Luke, Bob, Hope, and Ellen created an amusing commercial about the chicken nuggets at

McDonald's (with the slogan, "Our chickens have nuggets" in response to a Carl Jr. advertisement about chickens not having nuggets). For the final project, the two groups became three: Valic, Catherine, and Luke did a documentary about the news program in the advanced class (Project 5), Bob, Hope, and Ellen did a longer piece for presentation at the performing arts awards ceremony about program seniors including Hope (Project 3), and Pablo and Ricardo did a faux documentary about a musician.

The first thing to note is Luke's departure from one group, where his participation was peripheral, to the creation of a new group, in which he was central. His first project was the chicken nugget commercial, which was particularly well done and creative. During the editing process, Bob loudly but jokingly protested that Ellen, officially the producer, was running everything. When he was not complaining, Bob, Luke, and Hope made editing suggestions while Ellen actually did the editing and made decisions. Luke participated, but he did not contest his relatively minor role and was physically positioned furthest away from the computer.<sup>18</sup> Luke's acting part was cut out. He described his role in the project as "creative consultant."

In both casual conversation and during his interview, Luke referred to himself as a "screenwriter," thus it was no surprise that he sought the last project

---

<sup>18</sup> Hope and Ellen, in particular, were observed to hold a higher status position in school social life than Valic and Catherine, as evidenced by student interaction, teacher's interactions, and marked by their status as seniors and Hope's lead role in the fall musical production.

as a vehicle for his interests, but the satire that he had initially planned, after being heavily ridiculed by Ellen, was abandoned. As Luke described it, thinking small was impossible for a screenwriter.<sup>19</sup> Instead, a documentary project of the news program was selected. Valic and Catherine had participated in discussing the initial plan, but they became increasingly excluded as work on the documentary proceeded because only Luke was in the advanced class—having joined it for the second semester when he withdrew from regular enrollment in the school. Luke did all the recording with no input from the others. He also claimed to have made all the editing decisions, though Valic had physically performed the work. Luke had effectively freed himself from negotiating about production activity, affording him the opportunity to “own” his second project while not threatening and possibly improving his relations with classmates.

It is striking that Luke spoke about the project being “fun” for the advanced class members to see and participate in when overtly and discretely students routinely insulted him, calling him “weird” and “gay” among other things. (The teacher told one student that his problem was that he had been home schooled.) Luke had arranged the central position in his second project and expressed the belief that his usually peripheral position in the news program had been made central at the social level with this project.

---

<sup>19</sup> Evidence suggests that Ellen was influential in this decision, but the actual decision was made between observations.

Valic and Catherine also worked together with other students on their first project. Catherine never expressed significant interest in video or the two projects she worked on, but on the first project, she actively edited the piece with Pablo and Ricardo; it was her hands on the mouse when I observed them at work. Valic had done all the camera work over the weekend with his sister acting as the “drunk driver” and displayed feelings of ownership over the piece during the editing process by pacing back and forth behind his “collaborators” as they sat at the computer. He tried to assert himself into the activity, but was effectively shut out.

Catherine chose that moment to speak in Spanish and completed the exclusion that was initiated by the absence of a seat for Valic. Her role thus became central in editing and negotiating the relations between group members. As the only time observed speaking Spanish or taking a central role in production activity, the constant negotiation of her identity became apparent: As a girl who sat with the European-American students, she never displayed an interest or mastery in video, but with Latino males, she showed that she had some skills and took the lead. In the second project, Catherine was not observed participating at all after initial discussions, having chosen to work with two European-American, male students.

Valic, on the other hand, had initially planned but abandoned doing an autobiography for the final project. He, like Catherine, showed no sense of

ownership for the documentary. By contrast, Valic had displayed an interest in video but—like Luke—had problems negotiating his position within the production process. Bob had effectively used humor in negotiating his role, but Valic had only shown frustration and then silence. In his interview, Valic said that he intended to take the advanced class the following year but that he would rather be an “all round guy” rather than holding a specific position. This unfortunately was not consistent with the program. The nature of Valic’s interest in video was best demonstrated when he borrowed a camera on two occasions without having a particular purpose: The medium attracted him, but the course’s formal structure worked in opposition to his interests. His decreasing involvement was largely circumstantial—a product of highly defined roles and generalized interests—but his decision to not do a project by himself suggests that his interest or confidence was affected by limits on more personally meaningful participation.

Thus Luke and Valic both expressed ownership of the projects they had recorded, though Luke always maintained his humor while Valic became noticeably frustrated. Bob, on the other hand, had been the camera operator on both of his projects, and deflected his sense of ownership with jokes about Ellen; Bob maintained peripheral participation despite a reduced role in editing. What emerges from these examples is that working relations and the ownership of projects are not stable qualities and that collaboration can be problematic, particularly in this individualistically oriented school. In the transition from the

recording phase to the editing phase, in particular, some adjustments in the participation and power of individual members is necessary when roles are formally defined. The advanced class, which had more direct teacher involvement, students who were in their third and fourth years of the class, and produced a live show (integrating recording and editing phases) avoided these problems. The students, however, had very little creative input in the daily news program, and many had little to do. Compared to the other two schools, the rigidity of roles seems to have complicated the production process for some beginning students while allowing others to become disengaged.

The different ways and levels of participating were, in and of themselves, the most apparent changes in student activity at all schools. “Positional roles” were significant in the level as well as the quality of participation at Suburban High because the position of producer or camera operator were meaningful in the course (Bernstein, 1971). The status of individuals was determined by their position within the production rather than personal characteristics. At a formal level, this was required by the teacher, but in the groups I observed most closely, the roles governed how students worked. Other positional roles, such as gender and grade level, also appeared to be relevant. By contrast, the other two schools did not stress a division of labor according to position, and the projects were more easily and frequently shared as “personal roles” dominated. Only grade level appeared to influence relations, and this was explicit only during one interview.

In the absence of formal positions at these schools, the students who stopped participating were more visible because they were not signed on in an official capacity to a project, reflecting the type of alienation Bernstein described with personal roles (1971, p. 186). The problem found with positional roles was the considerable limit placed on how students could become involved, which would clearly have developmental consequences. What was particularly apparent at Suburban High is that the ways of participating are meaningful in student trajectories and development, but their meanings—as the roles themselves—seem to change with the immediate context more than as a result of student interest or aptitude. Other issues further support the influence of power and solidarity in these contexts.

### **Ethnicity, Class, And Gender In Participation**

While it has not been a central aim of this project, ethnic, class, and gender differences arose and are worth noting. Catherine's striking display of the relationship between gender and ethnicity has already been discussed, and previous work also discussed differences (Beaty, 2003). Worth and Adair (1972) noted that the African-American lower-class adolescents as compared to European-American middle-class adolescents and graduate students with whom they worked preferred to be in front of the camera rather than behind it. Chalfen (1992) related this specifically to class differences: "A behind the camera

orientation would be more natural for people in more dominant or powerful positions in the social order” because manipulating “symbolic events” would be the preferred route to achieving a sense of control, while being in front of the camera could be viewed as a more direct method of control and would likely be preferred by people in less powerful social positions (p. 230). This corresponds with the differences between restricted and elaborated codes that Bernstein (1971) associates with class. While these ethnic- and class-related observations are not supported, they are not entirely refuted either. What emerges as more important and key to the significance of ethnicity and gender is other aspects of the context and an elaborated notion of participation. The values promoted in the programs are negotiated with other school, ethnic, class, and gender values.

Suburban High was the program with the greatest range of ethnicities and social class among its students, but social class differences, though frequently invisible, did not appear to be wide. Ethnic differences, by contrast, were usually visible and appeared to be meaningful in both the level of participation in whole class activities and the status of positions held in the advanced class. Course 1 had fewer European-Americans, especially in the second semester when only two white males remained. In general, the students of this course were quieter. One European-American, male student developed an ease in his relations with the teacher that exceeded that of anyone else in the class, and this can be attributed to his interest in pursuing a career in “sound.” Clearer differences in participation

by ethnicity, however, were apparent in Course 2 where there was a greater variety of ethnicities. Self-segregation was apparent in seating arrangements, and European-American students interacted far more with the teacher, made their conversations more accessible to the whole class, and were freer in their use of the room. The clearest evidence of participation differences, however, was in the advanced class: There were fewer non-European-American students in general, and only one supervisory position was held by a Latino student, who frequently remarked on his being Mexican.

Gender differences were also notable. Male students outnumbered female students in all classes, though it was not so apparent in the advanced class. There was only one female who regularly attended Course 1; a second student was observed only twice, though the teacher confirmed she had been enrolled throughout. Course 2 was more evenly distributed, having four female out of fifteen students. Differences in participation between girls and boys were not distinct though: Some girls barely participated in classroom activities while others were at the center of general class social activity and their video projects. In the advanced class, participation differences were highly visible, not in the level of participation but in the type of participation. All technical positions—such as camera operator, editor, and sound engineer were held by male students while most on-camera “talent” and non-technical positions were held by female students. This differentiation was not related to power: The executive producer,

who was also an anchor and writer, was female, and one of the two producers was female. A frequent topic of conversation was the “blonds” who held the two anchor positions, suggesting that their ethnicity and gender were meaningful in student social relations. In general, gender and ethnicity mattered at Suburban High, but it was particularly the existence of stable positions for the news program that made it obvious.

Participation patterns by gender and ethnicity were not clear at Urban High, in part because roles were not usually identified, but the lack of ethnic differences and more even gender distribution helped make such differences less possible, as well as making for extremely different contexts. Particularly in Media 1, the numbers of males and females were approximately equal. Latino and African-American students did not self-segregate as much, and no ethnic differences in participation were apparent. Self-formed groups had single gender and mixed gender composition as was true at all schools. Particularly in Media 1, attendance problems made following the groupings difficult, but students generally sat at large round tables with the people with whom they were working, dividing themselves when the teacher required smaller groups.

The advanced courses were similar except that the classes tended to be smaller as was the proportion of female students. The girls only participated in production when they worked with male students in these courses. In Media 3, one table of all girls showed not interest in the class except to do some of the

open-book quizzes and was ignored by the teacher, while two other girls in the class participated in productions, working in different groups. Thus working with mixed gendered groups coincided with greater levels of female participation in the two advanced classes at Urban High.

It is important to note that while all three teachers at Urban High were European-American males, the Media 1 teacher had distinctly less stereotypically masculine ways of relating to his students, and as head of a student group for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning students,” he was clearly perceived differently by students: For instance, there was rarely any “banter” or conflict with students, exchanges maintaining a far more positive tone. Gender was clearly more significant in the advanced classes than in the beginning one, but students’ tendency to be younger, in what was effectively a more “introductory” type of course, and with a teacher who was less clearly identified with the dominant culture were each part of the context.

Boarding High students similarly presented ambiguously differentiated participation. There was, of course, only one ethnic group, though tribe and coming from a reservation versus an urban area may have been an issue. Gender seemed to be a salient issue in Course 2 because all the boys but none of the girls completed their projects, but this was influenced by the fact that both groups of girls were prevented from working when the necessary lap top was unavailable.

The next course had two mixed-gendered groups and one all-female group, but participation levels were unrelated to gender.

The problem, however, with examining whether students of any *type* preferred to be in front of the camera versus behind the camera is that all programs promoted the behind-the-camera position, though unevenly. A semester's worth of camera work at Suburban High was so narrowly constrained that students who may have wanted to perform in front of the camera did not have much opportunity. At Urban High, the advanced teachers specifically struggled with students to focus on behind-the-camera activity: The Media 3 teacher directly told students—as he was trying to convince some to drop his class—that they would not be allowed to act. This could be due to an in-front-of-the-camera orientation, but the Media 1 teacher never raised the subject, and many of his students moved freely between positions. At Boarding High, the promotion of a behind-the-camera position was more subtle: The emphasis on art seemed to orient students more toward purely visual elements and away from personal performances. At all schools, some students demonstrated a desire to avoid appearing in the video, particularly girls.

The question that appears to be more salient is not whether students were in-front-of or behind the camera; it is a question of the role the camera had in creating meaning beyond the simple documentation of events. Worth and Adair's (1972) assertions about the effects of camera work on the meaning of events is

not equally appreciated. Chalfen (1992), for instance, notes that the standard activity of home videographers is as a documenter who avoids having an impact. He defined the behind-the-camera position as the one in which symbolic actions occur rather than the immediately visible acts in front of the camera. The symbolic actions, as he describes, is what the manuals promote (p. 232).

Text books, like manuals, aim to have students use cameras in symbolic ways—though with very little attention to their meaning—and whether or not students “get it,” most courses are intended to promote more symbolic uses. In Media 1, students frequently chose to select someone from outside their group to operate the camera or simply put the camera on a tripod while they did the “real” activity in front of the camera. Was this because of ethnic or class differences? If so, what was different about the advanced classes or the students from the other schools?

The most noticeable difference between courses is the difference in context: Media 1 stressed the meaning of the project but did not promote video literacy in other ways. The students did what they thought they were supposed to do as well as what they knew best. The work on public service announcements was particularly demonstrative. Two boys, for instance, did a rap song because it was an activity they knew. The influence of the *school* context is, however, most visible in another project: Tiffany and Rachel sat at one of the round tables of their classroom, reading cue cards and having only a display of appropriate

condom use as a “visual aid.” (See Illustration 5.) The camera acted as their audience—as a way to simply record activity in the same way that scientists and home videographers tend to use it. They were using the format of a class presentation rather than anything that resembled a PSA. The frequency of “performances” discussed in the next section do not suggest a significant difference between programs either. Therefore, the programs' promotions and lack there of clearly impacted student work, but particularly in terms of understanding videography as symbolic activity, ethnicity and class were not relevant. This will be discussed further when considering the role of agency.

### **Motives And Un-motives In Resistance And Cooperation**

An essential part of what has captured educational reformers' attention about video is the potential for it to capture students' interests and to increase school's relevance, but the studied programs were not equally or consistently effective in exploiting this potential. In fact, many of my observations revealed the opposite, that the programs were capable of lowering the interest students had in video. At times, it was intentional: The teacher at Suburban High explained that he spent the first month in particular trying to convince students to take the course seriously rather than as a way to have fun making videos. Sometimes the demotivation was the result of relying on a standard practice. Boarding High's use of the iMovie tutorial in the first course was such an instance. The courses at Urban

High in particular contained so little production-related activity and traditional obstacles to beginning production that the creativity and enthusiasm shown in some of the projects seem remarkable. Students expressed interest and enjoyment in video production at all schools, but obstacles arose—such as the need to maintain working equipment, having too little time, and establishing an acceptable curriculum—that interfered with students' and teachers' interests. Though the teachers were generally the agents of these obstacles, their origin was in the larger system (see Fine, 1991, for a discussion specific to systemic obstacles to education). A clear connection between the constraints and promotions encountered and the level of enthusiasm expressed can be drawn from these observations, but the connection is not a direct one.

Some projects, as evidenced by the quality and content of edited videos and student participation, inspired an enthusiasm that corresponded with the project's tendency to exceed the assignment's constraints. Students employed tactics to pursue more personal interests and consequently increase their motivation for these projects, but it seemed that it was the discovery that a project could take on personal relevance and be an outlet for creativity *despite* the limited assignment that inspired some students. This corresponded with more enthusiasm than a simple reduction in project constraints. Projects with these qualities were evident at each school, but Media 3 at Urban High had some of the clearest examples. The teacher's later assignments to do commercials and public service

announcements became interesting to students when they introduced satire or unrelated creative expression into them. The teacher expressed mixed messages about the acceptability of the satires, encouraging two groups of male students to develop their ideas further while dismissing them as silly. Since most of these dismissals were expressed to me (although in the presence of students), he may have found value in them that he believed was not valued by authorities. It is particularly the teacher's relations with his students that highlighted the difference between the projects enthusiastically produced and those completed as quickly and easily as possible.

The Media 3 teacher routinely interacted with one portion of the students, who formed two or three groups throughout the semester. He would joke with them as well as talking to them about their projects. In whole class discussions, it was only these students who regularly participated, though it was generally with significant humor and diversions. All of the commercials (3) and the one PSA observed by these students were satires and contained other forms of humor: One commercial was for auto insurance that insured anyone, including drunks and "wetbacks," another was for a bracelet that turned people into superheroes, and the last was for a drink that made people smarter. Students during the production of the first two projects in particular had fun and created surprisingly high quality projects. The PSA followed up on the "Prof. It" insurance advertisement to do a piece for the "Drunk E. Foundation," asking for donations. Both included a

technique of editing shots together so that the head and torso of one person appeared to be on the legs of another student. The message and reason for the latter being a PSA was somewhat garbled, but the events it included were clear. All of these projects were technically well done and interesting to watch, adding to a certain carnivalesque climate (Bakhtin, 1968) in the classroom.

By contrast, the group of students that the teacher had introduced to me as the ones whom he could “count on” to do something, were rarely spoken to. This “good” group did all the projects but with little devotion or signs of creativity. One day, while recording their commercial just outside the classroom, the students tried different shots and to overcome lighting and sound problems, but the effort was minimal and everyone expressed a desire to finish quickly. They were struggling with how to deal with the enormous height difference between the actors when the teacher arrived. He offered inadequate advice (having them move the camera but not the actors from the shade into the sunlight), gave them a newly acquired microphone to try, and left without further interaction. He also did not return. The students did not compare the quality of sound using the new microphone with that produced with the built-in microphone, nor did they look at the effect of moving the camera. On a later project, similar efforts to finish as quickly as possible were observed. I also was unable to copy any of their work because the projects were lost, and upon my return the following semester, I

learned that the girl in the group had virtually stopped coming to class. She had also disappeared when I intended to interview her during the last class.

The differences between these two sets of students and their work are primarily differences in the student-school relationship: The “good” students had a relatively positive relationship with school, at least in the fact that they did most of their work. They were “serious” students and took a serious approach to assignments, but they became increasingly inattentive to their work: They seemed to some degree de-motivated. The students to whom the teacher gave lots of attention expressed their “dis-identification” with school and its values regularly (Hodges, 1998). They joked, insulting the teacher and each other, and they played with the teacher’s efforts to have students pitch their ideas, but in their ability to find a way of making the assignments also a joke, they became motivated to complete the assignments and to complete them with style. The ambivalence of these students was always on the surface and expressed with humor. Even the teacher’s ambivalence had an outlet when he interacted with these students, but the dominant school culture that rejects most humor was never fully absent. When the teacher assigned a news item as the last project, expressing a belief that these were the assignment to stick with, most students did less interesting and less creative projects.

The exception to the lack of creativity demonstrated in the news story assignment arose in Spike’s work. After having his production halted in Media 2

and not producing any videos all semester, he was inspired with the last assignment to do a project about the varsity football team on which he played. He did not really do a news piece, however: He artistically assembled clips of football games, using some special effects and setting this to a song. The video was officially done by three students. The other two students had recorded the games and sat with Spike during some of the logging and editing but did not contribute to its composition. Spike rarely spoke with the teacher and was observed to sneak out of the classroom more than once. He sat apart from the class, sometimes with another student nearby but marking his non-participation in his placement outside the *class area*. Even when he logged videotape (an activity he later abandoned without comment from the teacher), he did it outside the area routinely used in class. This was consistent with his participation the previous semester, but he had been truly excited about that project, despite marking his resistance by not writing a script. His sudden re-involvement for the last project is understood as arising from the permissibility of a topic that genuinely had his interest. He marked his continued resistance, however, in doing no narration or titles, effectively ignoring the actual assignment. Spike demonstrated a marked dis-identification with school. His eagerness to speak with me about his first project, however, suggests the degree to which *he* was a missed opportunity. Under different conditions, this student would most likely have enthusiastically embraced video production and developed a deepening sense of how to

communicate with video.

Media 3 was not the only one with such examples, and satire/humor was not the only technique used to broaden the constraints of an assignment so that the projects could take on greater personal value. Table 6 shows the breakdown of techniques identified by assignment, and Table 7 shows the breakdown by school. As these tables demonstrate, students were found to tactically seek personal interests outside the classroom agendas by introducing satire or other forms of humor, by inserting a performance or favorite activity, and by developing a personal message or story beyond the actual specifications of the assigned genre.

**Table 6: Number of Edited and (Unedited) Video Projects by Genre With Distinct Tactics for Broadening Assignment Constraints**

<b>Genre Assigned or Selected From List</b>	<b>Satire/Humor</b>	<b>Performance or Favorite Activity</b>	<b>Personal Message or Story Beyond Genre Definition</b>	<b>Total Edited (Unedited) Pieces</b>
Commercial	7 (1)	1(0)	0 (0)	12 (1)
How to/ Demonstration	0 (1)	0 (2)	0 (2)	0 (11)
PSA	1(0)	0 (3)	0 (0)	3(6)
Art Video	1(1)	0 (2)	4 (1)	5 (10)
Fiction	0 (4)	0 (1)	0 (1)	1 (9)
news story	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	9 (0)
other	0 (1)	0 (0)	1 (1)	4 (2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>9 (8)</b>	<b>2 (8)</b>	<b>5 (5)</b>	<b>34 (39)</b>

Performances and favorite activities included skateboarding, martial arts, music, and auto mechanics. Targeted interviews of students may have led to more projects being characterized as having favorite activities and to the exclusion of others that were included: Cooking, for instance, seemed like the easiest project for students in Urban High's New Media 1 and therefore were not considered for inclusion, but the group of students who chose to do a cooking show at Suburban High may have selected this because of an interest resembling that which led to other favorites. Some of the students at Urban High may have had a strong interest as well. Because additional information was not available, none of these were counted. Whenever skateboarding was included, however—which occurred at each school—this was counted as the introduction of a performance/favorite activity because it is an activity that is never officially brought into school and clearly has elements of performance. The general criterion for whether to count an activity as a performance or favorite was decided by the degree to which such activities were normally part of school activities, but additional interviews or observations specific to this category would strengthen interpretations based on this quality. For instance, one group of Urban High students was clearly devoted to skateboarding because they frequently talked about it and “practiced” with a toy skateboard, whereas its value to other students was not evident.

Personal messages and stories were identified as being beyond the defining parameters of an assigned genre. This category arose during analysis of the

“message” contained in videos, which will be discussed in the next section. Many of the art videos from Boarding High were found to have such a message that was not really part of the assignment, some having elements of a story. Wicket and Jerome's project displayed a church, a psychedelic poster of “Jesus” with multiple images, and an antenna, which all represented some form of authority, another

**Table 7: Number of Edited and (Unedited) Video Projects by Course With Distinct Tactics for Broadening Constraints**

Course	Satire/ Humor	Performance or Favorite Activity	Personal Message or Story Beyond Genre Definition	Total Edited (Unedited) Pieces
Boarding High, Course 1	0 (1)	0 (2)	0 (0)	0 (8)
Boarding High, Course 2	1 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	2 (2)
Boarding High, Course 3	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (0)	3 (0)
Suburban High Beginning TV Prod	4 (2)	1 (2)	1 (2)	12 (7)
Suburban High Other Projects*	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	6 (0)
Urban High New Media 1	0 (4)	0 (4)	0 (1)	1 (21)
Urban High (Advanced) New Media 2 and 3	4 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	10 (1)
Total	9 (7)	2 (8)	5 (4)	34 (39)

\*These include the daily news programs counted as one project, other projects observed in the advanced class, the video yearbook, and one project from another beginning class that was observed.

had the hint of a plot as a student wearing wings seemed to become a crow and was followed by an image of a bird's skeleton, and a third, entitled "aim," showed a meaningful sequence of shots: the word "A.I.M." (American Indian Movement), an American flag, red paint that had been dripped down a pillar and on a white rose, the flag, and "A.I.M" again. The problem of interpreting these images and art videos in general is more fully discussed farther on, but these interpretations have been applied to these categories.

Each of these qualities are viewed as tactics (de Certeau, 1984) that individuals used to introduce change into established genres, allowing them to exceed the assignments' constraints, though the "new" genres are not necessarily new. Commercials, for instance, have frequently been satirized for the sake of comedy, and so it is no coincidence that commercials were the most common genre to be satirized or otherwise contain humor. Six of the eight commercials with humor were satires of specific advertisements or sub-genres. Technically, these satires did not fulfill the assignment, particularly if the intent was to practice using video as a tool for persuasion, but teachers did not object to them. The lack of objection from teachers—particularly with the varied assignments given—is evidence that teachers did not have specific criteria for student development in mind when deciding on assignments, though it may also represent a flexibility on the part of teachers and in what is considered persuasive. Uses of

humor for other assignments tended not to be satirical, thus the basic assignment was not directly distorted.

Most of these three qualities were introduced without affecting the appropriateness of the project for a strict interpretation of the assignment. Instead, they tactically made the subject more interesting while remaining true to the teacher's expectations. It should be noted that the projects described in Table 7 as "Suburban High Other Projects," most of which were products of advanced students, generally contained none of the three qualities for extending an assignment's constraints. This is viewed as representative of the degree to which students had adopted the program's ideologies as their own. The advanced students were serious about video and had no need to introduce other activities or humor to increase their interest. Because the news program was included as one project—rather than the 18 observed—it should be noted that one airing of the show in particular introduced humor: It was nearly the end of the school year, and there was an atmosphere of silliness that spilled over into the show. A female anchor dressed as a man while a male reporter dressed as a woman. Despite this, however, the show reported the "news" as seriously as it ever had done. Many of the independent projects by advanced students were not observed but are believed to have been similarly free of these qualities because many were submitted to contests, thus the possibility of winning the contest became yet

another motivator. The absence of these qualities from projects, therefore, does not necessarily reflect a lack of personalization of projects.

There were, however, other examples of mis- or re-interpretations of assignments that were not recognized by teachers or students. As already mentioned, some commercials were actually public service announcements, and at least one public service announcement was satirized. After a semester of satires and comedies by most of the students in Urban High's Media 3, however, the last assignment—to create news stories—was approached seriously by all the students. Spike's re-interpretation was without humor.

Also at Urban High, one group of students—rather than doing something that was clearly a “how to” project—chose to do a “how to have safe sex” project, which seems to fall into another genre of educational video, particularly because of the length. The students clearly viewed it as educational, indicating during their interview that they wanted to educate the other students, who were mostly younger than they were. Most of what they recorded, however, was not truly educational but a series of opinions about safe sex practices without corrections. The interviews and skits did not contribute to the informational value of the project, leaving only the interview of the school nurse to demonstrate condom usage. During their interview, the students noted that they did not get from the interviews what they intended, but roughly 30 interviews (depending on where

the boundaries between interviews is placed) were conducted, thus they must have found sufficient value in them to keep going.

At Suburban High, by contrast, students for the most part requested special permission to work outside the constraints the teacher had imposed and were generally granted it. One project stood out as being of a specified genre but resulting from a process that avoided the detailed planning that was required: The project by Luke, Valic, and Catherine, a documentary of the school news program (#5), managed to have an impromptu approach to recording that was accepted by the instructor. The teacher required documentation of specific planning for projects, but this group found a way to avoid such specificity. Rather than plan shots, writing scripts, and controlling the sequence of events to be recorded, this group of students chose to record events without asserting a structure on them for the most part. This project highlights a difference in process that is discussed in the next section as well as representing another tactic that avoided assigned constraints. Other tactics from the planning phase included Spike's lack of a script, Bob's filling out a "log sheet" after the project was completed, and the silence in answer to requests for ideas at Boarding High.

All of these tactics, whether implemented during the planning, recording, or editing phases, are examples of students taking directions in their activity that were not prompted by the teachers' assignments or course practices. Students transformed the assignments, and in so doing seemed to increase their interest.

Sometimes, resistance was clearly visible but tolerated, and other times, permission was sought and granted, but in all these cases, something from outside the course was brought to the projects. Even in the instances of cooperation—when students enthusiastically produced the projects as prescribed—students sometimes showed signs of personalizing or internalizing the values expressed by the constraints of assignments. That some students found ways of expressing their ambivalence toward school values while enthusiastically producing projects suggests that humor has a use often disregarded by teachers. The potential of video production to increase student interest seems clear, but the risks of losing students who are already motivated should not be forgotten.

### **In Search Of Development In Video Production**

The products of video production courses arise from the activities of students, sometimes with direct participation by teachers or other people from outside the official group of participants, within the constraints enforced, and in response to the course, school, student, and other ideologies. They potentially demonstrate changes over time in the activities of students, sometimes when there is more than one project by the same group and sometimes within a project. Every project shows some of the differences in experiences between students. This section explores how these changes and differences relate to “development” or the use of

the video medium to intentionally communicate. A discussion of qualities that might suggest development and certainly describes some of the meanings and struggles of high school video production is presented.

Although references to video projects that were not copied have and will continue to be made, the 16 projects that have at least in part been obtained are the main source of data for the remaining analysis. They are briefly described in Appendix B. Of these 16, one group of students has been selected from each school for the most detailed analysis. The selection was made primarily to meet the needs of the analysis to be described in the next chapter: that the projects maintain some improvisation in the recording phase. The changing composition of groups and suitability of projects led to the selection of one focal project from each school, but in terms of development, a comparison between as many of the projects as possible serves to highlight similarities and differences. One project, “The Good, the Bad, and the Techies” (Project 5), will particularly be considered throughout this discussion to provide continuity. The project serves to elaborate upon the method because its numerous deficiencies illustrate what is present in many other projects.

It should be noted that there are reasons to doubt that any meaningful, systematic, “developmental” changes occurred in student activity. Reilly (1998) sought to investigate the role of video technology in education and found little evidence of “critical literacy” in student activities. This project found such

diversity in its programs that criteria with which to compare them must be broad, and the progress made—however small—is sought. The problem is how to recognize engagement with video activities that reflects—not the accomplishments—but progress toward quality work in the midst of abundant variation.

Worth, who first studied informant-made work, struggled with how much to regard film as being like speech, specifically asking whether cultural differences in film-related meanings was more a matter of “cognitive style” or of “language” (1981, p. 72). Though he concluded that the similarities with language were limited, the essential resemblance of both being methods of communication is taken up and used for considering development. And in this sense, the cultural-historical approach to language development offers important insights. Bakhtin described speech development as one in which another’s word gradually becomes one’s own (1986, p. 163). It is in this sense that the “words” and genres of professional video, absorbed and comprehended, are gradually internalized so that meaningful utterances can be assembled.

Children, particularly in the United States, grow up with video. If they pick up a video camera for the first time in high school—as was true for most of the students observed—video production could *not* have been entirely novel to them, unlike the Navajo with whom Worth and Adair (1972) worked. The moment they looked through the camera or even considered what they might record, the

numerous images they had witnessed and found meaning in were provoked. They are to some extent like people who have listened all their lives to speech, reacting to it and perceiving the world through it, but who have been unable to utter their own words. The shift from consumer to producer can clearly be expected to pose mechanical problems—the struggle of trying to duplicate observed techniques—but what other problems arise in developing communication via videography? Particularly when considering the many obstacles students confronted in production—inadequate access to equipment, class periods that were too short, requirements to demonstrate a thorough plan, the relatively novel experience of working with others in a creative manner—students had a great many tasks to balance in order to complete a project.

Video production, therefore, is conceptualized as a novel tool for communication that stresses the visual element so often left out of other literacies, with many changes in the quality of productions arising from contextual constraints and promotions. The search for communication that reflects the process of internalization is guided by the idea that change is happening in many areas simultaneously: “Development is viewed as occurring in several different (though interdependent) directions simultaneously and resulting in a structure best represented by a branching tree rather than a ladder” (Wertsch et al., 1993, p. 351). The way conceived to most adequately describe completed videos is to seek development through a number of characteristics that reflect upon the intent

and success of communication. These characteristics represent different processes that must work together in production and arose from the investigation of videos and the contexts of production rather than from preconceived ideas in the manner of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). After a discussion of the relation of unedited to edited video, the six characteristics that were found to be meaningful in the pursuit of development and their relations to one another are described.

### **Unedited Versus Edited Video And The Production Process**

Of all the ways in which diversity existed in video production, the way that poses the greatest obstacles for seeking development is the inconsistency in how “finished” the projects were. Most dramatically, this is evident in the projects that were never edited, but being edited does not necessarily mean that a project is finished either. “The Good, the Bad, and the Techies” (Project 5), for instance, is a project that was edited, but the students reported having run out of time so that the edits do not adequately represent their intentions; the project represents only what they had time for. The fact that the students required more time could be taken as an indication of a lack of development—they were not able to sufficiently plan a project in relation to its constraints—but the genre and production process they selected clearly required more time. Thus these aspects of the context need to be known and taken into consideration.

The search for development in unedited work also requires reference to the context. In one unedited piece from Urban High (Project 7), the story is evident as scenes were shot repeatedly and from several angles and were mostly in sequence. The few that were out of sequence were clear because of the repetition. Both experimentation and a degree of consideration about how the camera would show the scenes was evident, and care was taken to show all the essential pieces of the story. I did not need to speak with the students about their intentions because it was mostly evident. My only question, which remained unanswered, was about how they would integrate or choose between the various shots, and my impression was that this would have been a difficult task for them since their only guidance in this regard came in the form of teachers frequently reminding students that different angles make a video more interesting. They were, however, never given the opportunity to edit the project and commented during their group interview that they did not know at that time that editing was possible. The unedited work was the finished project as far as they were concerned.

There are, however, additional projects in which the unedited videotape bears little relation to the edited tape. This is most dramatic at Boarding High where students were given the camera and allowed to go out and shoot without making plans and without supervision (Project 15 in particular). Here the camera work involved more exploration and searching, even experimentation with different techniques. The difficulty is that the unedited video does not suggest the

quality or theme of the edited projects. In Project 15, interaction with other students and school staff characterize most of the shots, but the edited piece has no people in it. There are therefore, two distinct types of unedited video: one that is geared specifically toward the finished project and one that does not. Because the two types of unedited video are so different, distinguishing what does and does not serve as a suitable substitute for an edited piece is not difficult. The difference in process is apparent in the unedited video.

This raises the need to specify the different phases of production. Zettl (1995), who authored the books used in two of the schools, distinguishes three stages of the process as it is customarily described: *Preproduction*, *Production*, and *Postproduction*. To clarify what students actually did, however, parts of these stages are highlighted through the discussion of the *planning phases*, *recording phases*, and *editing phases*. These correspond to Zettl's stages, but some students participated in additional activities. *Logging*, for example, is technically part of production, but students frequently skipped it or logged tape only after they edited—simply to meet the teacher's requirements. Some productions included rehearsal, but never as much as teachers seemed to prefer. Planning sometimes included creating scripts or storyboards, the assignment of roles, and the documentation of the *idea*, but some groups showed no indications of having had an idea before beginning to record. Since video and observation are the only indications of which activities students participated in, the planning phases are in

some instances entirely unknown. Future research—particularly if a greater emphasis is placed on the production process—would best obtain all the artifacts related to production, including work done on paper during planning. Because this study did not include permissions for this collection, a comparison of unedited to edited video, when both are available, are the primary indications of development, supplemented by observations of some of the production activity.

Initially, my hypothesis was that stronger communication would be indicated by a stronger similarity between edited and unedited tape, but after observing courses with very different requirements and having experimented in making “video art,” two radically different production processes have become evident, which seem to have no bearing on the quality of the finished product. There simply are two processes—production with extensive preproduction work and production that consists of explorative camera work and extensive editing. The dominant approach involves having a concrete plan before beginning to record, but some mixture of the two approaches is possible.

Suburban High formalized its values by requiring that paperwork reflecting preproduction work be submitted at the time of viewing, but Urban High went a step farther and required clear evidence of planning before access to equipment was given. At Urban High, the result of requiring extensive planning was that very few students in Media 2 ever worked on a video and the majority of time in Media 1 was spent working (or not working) on the planning stages. One—and only one

—of the observed projects at Suburban High (“The Good, the Bad, and the Techies,” Project 5) evaded the pressure of documenting a precise plan with a project that necessitated more explorative camera work. Similarly, one project in Media 1 (“Sex Talk,” Project 8) planned interviews that were designed in very general terms. In the case of “The Good, the Bad, and the Techies,” the lack of planning became a problem because they did not have sufficient time to select the best shots and apply all the editing they intended (such as more music), but the plan nevertheless was a valid and potentially rich one.

At Boarding High, by contrast, only one project showed any indications of planning before recording, and it was never finished. Observation also revealed that efforts to promote planning were sporadic. Two of the courses started with requests for lists of ideas, but the students were never reminded of those lists when production began or otherwise guided toward developing a plan. The one project with some planning involved a small story: Female students climbed a fence to escape school. The real “work” of most projects took place during editing when the unedited video was sifted through, experimented with, and placed in order. The “planning” in this case did not involve activity away from the video but actual manipulation of clips until a satisfying project emerged. In this sense, the planning was visual and sometimes aural—in the sense of matching images to music—rather than symbolic or abstract. More importantly, it was more concrete and relied less on anticipating what might look or sound good. Reilly (1998, p.

146) addresses the problem of “visual literacy” as opposed to other forms of literacy and the necessity of developing it specifically. One possibility is that the expectation of significant planning without the use of the camera might pose a formidable obstacle to some students, despite years of “consuming” video. The lack of recognition given to the novelty of video production is likely to make *abstract recording activity*—the planning of camera uses without the camera—much more intimidating.<sup>20</sup> When actual planning as a preproduction activity happened, the subject of how to use the camera and how to edit were rarely the beginning point; the beginning of planning activity was normally with the development of an *idea*, a message the students wanted to convey.

### **The Clarity Of A Message**

Worth and Adair asserted in 1972 that anyone can learn to create *films*. Both film and videotape are viewed as easier than most art forms because, unlike drawing and painting, a nearly exact reproduction of what is seen is the normal result—whether a person is skilled or not (p. 24). Technological differences and advances make video significantly easier than film: One’s work can be reviewed in the camera immediately and re-shot if necessary—it does not need to be sent to the developer or even removed from the camera—and most video cameras can be set

---

20 My own experience of trying to create an “art video” when the video had been recorded without a plan suggests that it is not an easier process: I could not devote much time to it and after about three hours of attempting to edit various clips together, I gave up. The possibility of a third, more dynamic process that involves planning, exploration, and evaluation leading to more planning arises as a way for teachers to promote greater development.

to focus and adjust for changing light levels automatically. But creating a meaningful and identifiable *message* involves more than pointing and shooting. To some extent, however, there is not general agreement about whether a message is necessary in “good” video.

Chalfen (1992) found that “home movie-makers” rarely follow the advice of manuals and instead focus on recording, documenting, and reproducing: “Here it is interesting to note that the ‘naive’ home movie-maker embraces the view of film-making often promulgated by social scientists of certain schools, namely that editing is ‘bad’, planning the subjects’ activity is taboo, objectivity is destroyed by heavy-handed editing, and so on” (p. 232). Such an approach seems to avoid intentional communication and can be found in many video activities, but generally, video production courses can be expected to stress at least the potential of the camera operator (and editor) to “promote a narrative structure that emphasize[s] *the manipulation of real-life everyday reality* [author’s emphasis]” (Chalfen, p. 232).

A conflict, however, arises in doing projects that in some way or another are supposed to present “reality.” In these cases, there is an expectation of *selectively showing* reality, while commercials and fictional projects *manipulate* reality. The genre in which a production is placed alters at least the perception of the production team’s function. This difference or more generally the influence of the camera on “reality” were *not* specifically addressed during any observed

activities. The *question* about how objective video is should ideally be raised in a quest for literacy, but none of the observed programs overtly pursued such an objective. Therefore, the lack of attention to it is not surprising.

The problem then is how to address the necessity of a message when video is so frequently viewed as an objective medium. A *message* can be understood in numerous ways and the key to defining the message of an “objectively” documented activity is in the purpose of the recording, defined in terms of the genre it represents. A news story selectively shows reality so that it can make a point; the message is like the thesis statement in an essay. It is not hard to find a message in a good news story or a documentary, though clearly it asserts a distortion of reality. A recording of a football game, on the other hand, is not as distinct: If it is made for the team to review, then it should document key events for evaluation; it highlights successes and failures and is selectively played for coaches and team members. The *clarity of the message* is thus defined by how well the video serves its purpose.

The *clarity of a message* is sought as one aspect of development that becomes visible in video projects because the message is so fundamental to a project. Such a criterion was explicit in the evaluations only at Suburban High where it was a very small part. On the form, “Project Critique Sheet,” which was for students to complete during the class screenings and which represented the

rubric used by the instructor, the explicit criterion was written as “What was the basic idea?” and was one of eighteen criteria to be rated.

Despite the small part the *idea* had in the overall evaluation, the lack of explicit concern with overt communication is not taken as a reflection of its triviality but rather as a reflection of its embeddedness. The message being communicated was at the center of many discussions both in planning and during viewings at all schools, but it was rarely discussed in terms of “communication” or “message” because these are so implicit to the activity. As in the form described above, the message was more frequently discussed in terms of the “idea” or even in terms of a specific example of a genre, particularly when working on commercials and public service announcements for which students frequently started with an actual advertisement. The clarity of a message is such a basic criterion that when the basic message is not obvious, nothing else is discussed until an explanation is given. These explanations were necessary to further discussion. This was most striking at Urban and Suburban Highs when they reviewed unedited footage: The teachers began by asking for students to explain their videos, and questions were asked before there was any other discussion.

The significance of the message is most clear when it is weak. In “The Good, the Bad, and the Techies,” the project was clearly a documentary about the student news program, and an effort to insert humor was evident, but the lack of a more specific message was its greatest weakness. Rather than narrating the

video, an opening clip was selected in which Luke described to a student that “This is our final for third period.” In practical terms, the statement did describe what the project was, but it failed to communicate anything that the audience members of his class did not already know. And no explanation is offered of who is being shown. The following clip is of a student describing what he was doing for the show, but again key elements are missing—such as what role he played in the show or even an explanation that the show was the focus of the documentary. The intended audience was never evident in the work, despite Luke describing the project as being something fun for his classmates. Furthermore, it was rarely clear what a clip contributed to the project as a whole, and though there was a clear subject—the show—little could be learned about the show from this project. Unlike most of the other projects produced at Suburban High, the technical problems, which were numerous, dominated in “The Good, the Bad, the Techies.”

The biggest problem in considering the clarity of a message, however, comes in trying to evaluate the art videos completed (or not) at Boarding High. As already discussed, the unedited work frequently was entirely explorative, but in the edited work, there was also some mystery about the existence of messages. The video called “aim” (not obtained for detailed analysis) stood out as a problem: The word A.I.M., which I only recently learned stands for American Indian Movement, an image of a U.S. flag, and an image of red paint dripped like blood, suggested a critique of American patriotism, but the girl who worked on it

and spoke about it during the viewing did not confirm or deny this meaning when asked; she was unwilling or unable to respond to the graduate-student intern's question about it.

This problem of interpretation seems inherent to *art*. One non-focal project clearly had no consistent message: It had a series of disconnected events, including the art teacher barking like a dog, which seemed to reflect two boys playing rather than trying to say something because no connection with other images or sounds was apparent. Most of the edited projects at the school were much tighter and at least consistent, and the existence of a sound track on many of them greatly helped create a mood, though they might have been dismissed by some as nothing more than *music videos* (specifically devalued by the Media 3 teacher at Urban High). In fact, the videos produced in the last observed course were so well put together and the student interns so heavily involved in production (particularly when compared with the previous courses) that I had some doubts about whose ideas were most represented. The one set of unedited tapes from this course ("Perspectives," Project 16) indicates that the intern did make suggestions, but also that students explored the uses of the camera and thus were truly participating. This question of whose voice is represented will be further addressed under the topic of agency, but the clarity of a message can be addressed even in the art videos.

## Coherence

The criteria for a message depends on the genre, and comparing work across genres becomes a new source of trouble because different genres are not equally difficult, but there is a level below the message that makes comparing different genres somewhat more straightforward. This level is termed “coherence.”

According to Gibson (1986), understanding moving pictures is easier than understanding still images because it is more like our experience of life. On the other hand, the use of the camera to convey that someone has moved from one point to another, for example, poses a greater challenge for the producer than the audience. The creation of understandable moving pictures is viewed as a far less reflexive activity. The *coherence* of a project is thus defined in terms of these types of movement and the coordination between different images and sounds—different clips—that make a video perceivable.

This criteria, also, cannot be equally applied across genres though, and intentional breaks in coherence can occur, but some level of coherence is necessary for an audience to follow any thread of meaning. In fact, the technique of montage (Eisenstein, 1949/1977) creates meaning via the placement of clips in a sequence. To some degree, coherence can be equated to the storyline when such a progression exists. Except for when coherence is intentionally disrupted, which would reflect a particular *style*, there should be a relative seamlessness to any video. When clips are not tied together, it is apparent: In “The Good, The Bad,

And The Techies,” the placement of clips in relation to one another is rarely reflected in the activities or movement through the room.

### **Agency And The Location Of Meaning**

Agency is intricately involved in communication and development, and by locating agency in a particular project, cultural differences, individual differences, and changes over time are revealed that speak to the ethnic and class differences observed by Worth and Adair (1977) and Chalfen (1992) (as previously discussed). An analysis of agency in student video projects demonstrates how the creation of meaning happens sometimes in the camera and sometimes in front of the camera, and it shows how its location is associated with the video genre and context as much as with cultures or individuals, revealing instances of how agency can be asserted at both the collective and individual levels.

Agency is “defined as an activity, a way of being in concrete situations” (Stetsenko and Arievidtch, 1997), and it is viewed as being “frequently a property of dyads and other small groups rather than individuals” (Wertsch et al., 1993, p. 337). Moreover, “the agent is viewed as being an irreducible aggregate of individual (or intermental functions) *together with mediational means*” (Wertsch et al., p. 341). My use of the term is drawn particularly from the view Vygotsky and Luria put forth in their discussion of tool use in the “*formation of intention and previously planned purposeful action*” (1994, p. 134) with a stress on

*intention* because planning and purpose tend to be under the level of awareness as studied in this project. Agency is—for the present purposes—about the effort to influence the progression of events,<sup>21</sup> and as such, agency is associated particularly with the initiation of events. Based on this perspective, the video camera is a tool that affords unique opportunities for camera operators and production teams to distinguish intentions from those inscribed in the context: Cameras have a unique potential to create new events directly and indirectly.

The focus on agency began with the observation during the pilot study that some students some of the time exploited the power of video cameras to shape events in real time—in essence to create a message that is one's own rather than one already available in the context. Agency surfaced as an issue because students were using the camera sometimes to record events as they happened and sometimes were creating events in how they used the camera. This tendency to shape events in video production is viewed as an advance upon the tendency to allow the recorded activity to create events because the camera has become a tool for relating to the activity, possibly overcoming some of its constraints to pursue an agenda other than those already in the activity.

The initial manner of considering agentic videography, however, looked only at agency in operating the camera, focusing on the degree to which events

---

21 The word “influence” is used rather than “control,” which is used in many discussions of “efficacy,” because to control or to seek to control events is an extreme use of power, suggesting that other’s actions are constrained and as such is only one way to influence events.

were shaped by the camera operator's activity. Most projects, it turned out, involved activities created for the camera, such as in fictional pieces, in which the director calls “Action” and the events unfold for a scripted camera as well as actors. The camera operator in such cases has very few opportunities to demonstrate *personal* agency. Agency was exercised in the planning phase, and when done well, agency is quite high. The emphasis on planning—particularly with scripts or storyboards—created a complication for locating agency in uses of the camera, but it was not the only one.

A related complication concerns the group nature of most video production. The focal project from Urban High was not thoroughly planned, but it was produced by a group of students who thoroughly shared and coordinated the work. This was particularly evident in analyzing their agency during their interviews. The camera started and the interviewer asked a question: It was in their coordinated efforts that events were initiated and shaped. Therefore, agency was not located behind the camera but distributed between the person behind the camera and the one in front of it holding a microphone. This group presented the best examples of distributed agency.

But then is the “location” of agency important? The question first raised by Worth and Adair (1972) about where their students preferred to be—in front of the camera or behind the camera—is potentially another problem. If a group of students puts all their attention into the action in front of the camera, it is not

immediately clear that their agency is low, but the purpose of the analysis is to seek some evidence of developmental processes in video production—not to investigate the level of agency practiced by students. Therefore, some consideration of how actual production proceeds is essential.

**Illustration 5:** Tiffany and Rachel in Their “Public Service Announcement” About Safe Sex, Project 12, present a format more similar to a classroom talk.



An example from a previous discussion clarifies this position. The project by Tiffany and Rachel (see Illustration 5) was supposed to be a PSA. Not only was it worthless as a PSA, being too long and ineffective, but it demonstrated the degree to which the two girls simply had not discovered the value of video. It demonstrates extremely low agency in camera use because they did not operate the camera themselves and even more because they gave no attention to how the camera might be used to create a *video* presentation rather than a *classroom* presentation. The camera had no impact on how the activity proceeded. It did not

truly initiate events; it simply was turned on so that events could proceed. Thus in considering whether events are initiated by the camera or not, attention to the relationship between the activity and the camera is necessary. Just because all the activity is “for” the camera, does not mean that the camera was instrumental in shaping activity.

Some of the strongest examples of agency in camera use were in the focal project from Boarding High (Project 15). Wicket and Jerome created nearly every event through the interaction of the camera with the environment. This happened when they displayed and commented upon different murals and displays, and it happened when they created new events in a basketball game by zooming in on first one player and then another, following a bystander who walked around the game for a moment. The quality of the video would have been marred by such action if the game had been the focus, but it was not. It demonstrated a high level of agency because events were created through a selection of activities. When someone is following the action of a game with a camera, there is little opportunity for this type of agency.

Another questionable use of agency arose in “The Good, The Bad, And The Techies.” Luke demonstrated agency most in his choice of projects, but he intentionally chose to take a “fly-on-the-wall” approach to the project, making an effort to avoid affecting activity. This was in part a sign of his lack of development: He did not understand the work that goes into “capturing reality.”

The problem was most dramatically illustrated when he interviewed the two producers of the program. They sat on chairs in front of Luke, but Luke was reluctant to do more than turn the camera on. One of the producers asked finally, “So are you going to interview us?” beginning an awkward moment in which they decided between themselves what to talk about. Luke was unwilling to insert himself into the activity enough to ask a question, and his lack of agency showed in the final project. It may have been a style he was trying to adopt, but it reflected his usual role in the classroom as well as his lack of development in videography.

Agency is an essential part of development, and its uses and absences reflect developmental levels. This relationship between agency and other aspects of development were particularly evident in Holland et al.'s (1998) study of romantic expertise. They equated expertise with the use of agency. They wrote of the women they studied in relation to their agency in romance:

[The participants of the study] differed both in how much they relied upon the directions and motivations of others and in how they formulated and responded to problematic situations. Those who appeared to be less knowledgeable or less expert closely copied and took direction from others, attended to relatively circumscribed aspects of relationships, and had difficulty generating possible responses to romantic situations. (p. 111)

The exercise of agency is thus dependent on having an internalized sense of what motives to act upon. Luke's lack of agency in production was in part a symptom of his novice status, particularly with producing documentaries, and his usual passive role in social relations—as if he did not have sufficient expertise in these situations to act independently. On the other hand, this inexpertise with recording is moderated by the agency he displayed in choosing to pursue a production process with exploration that so countered the practices promoted by the program.

Each of the programs promoted different “cultures” of agency. Practices were constrained and promoted such that there were different affordances for agentic activity and different preferred ways of being agentic. At Suburban High, students were encouraged to use a wide array of equipment and to plan production activity in detail. Thus most recording was done in relatively controlled settings where good lighting and audio could be guaranteed—particularly among advanced students. At Boarding High, the opposite was true: Planning became ignored, and students had few affordances for *controlling* the contexts of their recording. Ironically, the lack of control afforded opportunities for one form agency not possible in controlled settings; Boarding High students could initiate events in their use of the camera without requiring other people's

cooperation or awareness. This in turn led to a more individualistic approach to recording.

Most important to this analysis in all these “locations” of agency is how it expresses itself differently during different phases of the work. These require separate analyses. The first is the agency exercised in the recording phase with attention to the role of planning and the second is the agency in the editing phase. Agency could also be expressed in the planning phase, but this is not addressed.

### **Agency In Camera Operation**

The recording phase, with a camera as the tool, has been the central concern of this analysis. The previous work with informant-made film and video established its basis. Worth and Adair (1972) called a segment of film created by starting and stopping the camera a *cademe*. This is more commonly known as a *shot*. Bellman and Jules-Rosette(1977) further divided cademes into smaller meaningful units based on what they called “cademic markers.” The cademes are thus segmented into events “by camera techniques that serve as markers to show particular actors, follow central action, study interesting movements, display instruments, exhibit important medicines, and point out significant periods within a given occurrence” (Bellman and Jules-Rosette, p. 5). Their approach demonstrated that these common techniques took on particular, consistent meanings in an informant's

work that revealed information about the culture and the informant's position within that culture.

Applied to student videos, cademic markers were found to indicate the boundaries of camera-related events and to reflect the agency of the camera-operator in the creation of events (Beaty, 2001). The analysis focuses on the relations between the use of camera techniques and the events in front of the camera, seeing these as a dialog in which the camera responds to actions and initiates new events. The events themselves are defined as discrete actions—similar to Bakhtin's (1986) definition of an utterance—of subjects, the camera, or a coordination of both. When events were initiated in the actions of the camera operator, such as panning from one object to another, agency is deemed high. On the other hand, if some action in front of the camera is merely noted—marked—with a cademic marker but not initiated by it, then agency is considered relatively low. A further look within and outside events adds to the analysis, but this approach facilitates a comparison across genres.

When events are entirely scripted, the approach does not need radical changes. While it is difficult for the camera operator to demonstrate high levels of agency in these cases, the *team* producing the particular project can exert the highest levels of agency. Agency in camera operation is demonstrated not in whether or not the camera actions are scripted but in whether or not they have an impact on the scene—whether or not they use the features or placement of the

camera to shape the appearance of the event. The basic question is about whether or not the camera and its operator are active or passive participants.

The problem that arises is that—particularly in highly scripted student projects—the most frequent action of the camera is to start and stop. It is not uncommon for there to be no other actions. Sometimes, such as in doing interviews, this simple action can have a great deal of effect on the activity and teamed with the work of the interviewer demonstrates a high use of agency. At other times, however, the camera is simply a tool to document rather than shape events. This was particularly prevalent at Urban High. These other actions—like zooming in—can be viewed as symbolic uses of the camera, but they need not be that abstract or meaningful to be considered agentic. A simple pan from one person to another or a careful placement of the camera looking over someone's shoulder at the person that is being spoken to are highly agentic because they have a strong effect on the shape of the event. Thus agency in camera operation exists not only in the initiation of an event but in some effort to mold an event for production purposes.

### **Postproduction Agency**

My initial intent was to focus primarily on the recording phase, but the agency (as well as the technological proficiency) in the editing—apart from the camera work—necessitates some consideration. Good editing can save

problematic source material as was demonstrated at Boarding High several times, and low levels of agency in camera work can be turned around in the editing process. “The First 4” (Project 14), using video originally shot for the football team for use by the coach, demonstrated high levels of agency. Spike applied several special effects, such as a carefully placed slow motion, and despite an unclear message, given that it was assigned as a news piece, he created an artistic music video, asserting yet another form of agency by not strictly following the assignment. This is the strongest evidence of how agency can be expressed almost entirely in the editing process because the camera work, while serving its purpose, tended to passively follow the action without differentiating between events.

“The Good, the Bad, and the Techies,” on the other hand, showed little agency in the recording phase *and* little in the editing phase. There was very little effort to shape events by applying effects or even changing the start or end points of clips. Luke added a song that was appropriate and amusing, but it ended abruptly and was the only such effect. Perhaps if he had had more time as he desired, he would have asserted more influence at this stage. The project's lack of agency at the editing stage is perhaps most clear when compared to another poor project that showed more agency: The non-focal project from the second course at Boarding High, though it had no evident message or consequential aesthetic appeal, showed agency in the students' use of a dog's bark and other effects.

## **Technological Proficiency**

Technological proficiency was the central goal at Suburban High but was not entirely ignored at the other two schools. The Media 3 teacher reflected the significance of technology in his desire for text books geared to it and in offering additional equipment, such as microphones, to students; he attempted to address what he viewed as a deficiency in student projects. On the other hand, the Media 1 teacher gave no attention to technical matters. At Boarding High, the man who was program director during the first two courses spoke clearly about using an apprenticeship model in which technology was taught more on a need to know basis, believing it was a more effective method of instruction yet addressing its centrality. The “correct” use of technology—a perspective that asserts a standard use—was part of the institutional ideology only at Suburban High.

Teasing apart when standard practices are truly better and when they are merely a style can be difficult, but inadequate use of technology can distract audiences from a project’s message, perhaps clouding it all together. Sometimes a problem is evident when voices we are supposed to understand are inaudible, and sometimes a problem is clear when a few frames of a stray scene flash past. Therefore, despite my initial intent to not consider technological proficiency (in the same way papers are often not graded for grammar), it became clear that some direct consideration of technique is necessary to fully understand learning and development in video production courses.

The most common technical problem, which was noted by Reilly (1988) in his observations, was in the audio. Suburban High had the necessary equipment—an array of wireless and wired microphones as well as a mixing board—but there was a tendency among beginning students to use it wrongly or to fail to use it at all. One such example was with the cooking video produced at Suburban High: When they arrived at the recording site, they discovered that the microphone was not working and so used only the built-in microphone. The result was poor audio. At Urban High, the Media 1 class did not have access to a lot of the school equipment and what existed for advanced students was limited. In “Sex Talk” (Project 8), students used a non-working microphone as a prop and even pretended to have ear pieces that enabled them to communicate with teams at other sites as if it were a live show, but the lack of a real microphone seriously interfered with the ability to hear interviews. On the other hand, it should be noted that even in professional live television, technical problems—particularly with microphones—arise, and this is not viewed as the most important type of problem to evaluate if some effort has been made to remedy it.

The real need to consider technical proficiency is evident when considering “The Good, The Bad, And The Techies.” As noted, this project was an attempt at a very different production process than other projects at the school, and perhaps the problems are a result of this difference, but the fact is that it suffered from several lighting problems (being either over- or underexposed), a failure to white

balance, distracting movements of the camera associated with never using a tripod, and a complete lack of attention to the sound problems. These problems—with the poor editing due partly to insufficient time—made for a project that was very hard to follow. Luke indicated that some of these “flaws” may have been partly intentional, but the audio problems and some of the lighting problems seriously interfered with following the video’s activity. Given the emphasis of the program on technology, this poor or absent use of technology stood out.

### **Aesthetics**

Aesthetics are a particularly subjective yet powerful characteristic. It was not initially considered but arose as an essential part of development as analysis proceeded, particularly for the art videos, but in all schools, aesthetics were commented upon. When commented upon, it was generally due to some visual appeal: palm trees reflecting off a windshield in a circle around the driver’s face (see Illustration 6, Still 1), a person’s movement framed by the railings on either side of her path (two sets of early, highly structured shots at Suburban High unavailable for analysis), and the sun shining through the slats of a roof (Still 2). Some students also developed “special effects” that were notable, such as making it seem that the torso of one person was on the legs of another or playing with perspectives by rotating the camera or repeatedly using the zoom.

**Illustration 6: Examples of Shots With Aesthetic Value**



Still 1: From Urban High's Project 9



Still 2: From Boarding High's Project 16

These moments were striking, but the application of aesthetics across projects is unquestionably subjective. The moments deserve to be noted, but the key to seeking development in aesthetics is dependent on an emerging pattern. This requires seeking multiple striking images or more simply to look for an emerging style. Even if a style changes over time, which one would hope for, the emergence of a style is evidence of developing an aesthetic sense that can be acted upon. “The Good, the Bad, and the Techies” seemed to demonstrate a lack of aesthetic awareness: Potentially interesting images were not emphasized, and the song mentioned above ended abruptly. On the other hand, the project was well outside the norms of the program. It showed an awareness of style in efforts to avoid influencing events and in Luke's reference to his first day of recording (not available for analysis) as having the “Blair Witch” effect (a style allowing the camera operator to be visible in camera movements). Thus Luke demonstrated some awareness of style that might have become more apparent if the technical problems were resolved. This project shows some of the problems of analyzing the

aesthetics of student videos—particularly without additional interview time.

Aesthetics in particular would be served by multiple observers.

### **Self-Expression**

Self-expression relates to but exceeds the scope of other qualities, yet it was not explicitly commented upon in any class. To some extent, self-expression is inherent in an individual's ability to influence events, and expressing an aesthetic style relates, but self-expression involves a noticeable personalization of the project. In some senses, this personalization is a reflection of having truly internalized the tools and techniques of video production. It does not require that the project's subject be about oneself, though this is one way to achieve a degree of personalization. Self-expression, for instance, was evident in the projects with humor or satire. The clearest mark of self-expression is a sense of uniqueness, even if that uniqueness has arisen through collaboration. It can be the product of a group collectively expressing a valued message or using a valued technique.

Many constraints at Suburban and Urban Highs, however, worked in opposition to the development of self-expression whereas the structure given projects in the courses described by Goodman (2003) and Reilly (1998) promoted personalization. Nevertheless, students from each program used affordances to personalize their projects despite the lack of promotion. The most interesting part of “The Good, The Bad, And The Techies” was that it seemed to show self-

expression in the choice of subject matter and intentions more than many other projects—partly because it did not adopt the production ideologies promoted by the course—but the students seemed to lack the skills and time needed to pursue their interests. Self-expression, like all the qualities, was not consistent within projects but frequently would rise for a moment before fading again.

**Table 8: Summary of Production Activity and Indications of Development**

	<b>Unedited Video</b>	<b>Edited Video</b>
<b>Clarity of a Message</b>	Planned approach: Do the shots approximate the intended message?	Is there a clear message that is consistent with the project's genre?
	Explorative approach: not applicable	
<b>Coherence</b>	not applicable	Does the sequence of shots clearly convey the intended information?
<b>Agency</b>	To what extent are events shaped by the production team?  Who participates in shaping events and how?	To what extent does editing shape the events in the project?
<b>Technological Proficiency</b>	Does the use of the camera and associated technology contribute to the project's message and coherence?	Do the editing techniques and decisions contribute to the project's message and coherence?
<b>Aesthetics</b>	Do the images and/or sound suggest a style?	Does the editing suggest a style?
	Are there striking images or sounds?	Does the editing create striking images or sounds?
<b>Self-Expression</b>	Is there evidence of personalization?	Is there evidence of personalization?

### **Changes In Video Production Activity And Development**

A summary of the characteristics considered in projects is presented in Table 8. Each characteristic represents areas that are indicative of development, but development itself is reflected in all the characteristics and the way they relate to one another and the constraints of production. Development can best be observed by examining how their expression changes from one project to another, though the expression of a characteristic would vary with the genre and context as well as student development. To consider video as a tool for communication, these qualities must somehow be brought into dialog with one another and the contexts of production. The surprising result is that indications of overall development can occur even as one or more characteristics becomes worse over time.

### **Cases of Questionable Development**

In this section, the development suggested and missing in three focal projects will be discussed according to the criteria described in the previous section. The development apparent in the use of video technology is more closely considered with these projects so that the successes and failures represented in them can be brought into dialog with the microanalysis of the the student-school relationships also represented in them, but this microanalysis will not be presented until the next chapter. An alternative way to read the text, which has the advantage of

focusing on particular cases rather than the qualities that define them, would be to skip the analysis of the focal videos until after reading the general discussion in the next chapter and then reading the focused discussions of each case in sequence. The difficulty to this approach is that considerable comments about each case is sprinkled throughout the chapters. The text is presented in its current sequence to focus on the analytic process.

### **Development In Urban High's "Sex Talk"**

One group of students stood out in Urban High's New Media 1 because the students were two years ahead of most of the students in the class, because they displayed a more positive student-school relationship, and because they were the only group to edit a project during the semester. The students could easily be considered the best in the class, but being older played an important role in this and in their work for the focal project "Sex Talk." According to Rosemary, they wanted to tell the ninth graders "to think about it," that is, to take their sexual behavior seriously. They clearly put more thought and energy into the project than other students, who mostly recorded themselves cooking, and this group was "serious" about their project, even if they frequently became silly. The video is just over 34 minutes long and consists of 72 shots. Though it was not edited, there were six distinct sequences: They started with two introductory segments (sequence 1), moved on to a condom commercial (sequence 2) and then a skit of

a girl speaking to her father about sex (sequence 3). A series of mostly impromptu interviews of students and teachers, in groups and alone, followed (sequence 4). One interview was a sequence in and of itself, being of the school nurse in the form of a skit about a student seeking information; it was much longer and informative than the others (sequence 5). Lastly, the introductions were re-recorded away from school at one of the student's homes with only two of the students present (sequence 6).

The project had a clear topic and surprisingly coherent movement from scene to scene, given that it was not edited; the introductory shots provided clear indications of how it might have been edited. The message, however, became vague, particularly during the interviews. Part of the problem was that the project was not in strict accordance with the assigned genre: A "how to" video as promoted should have demonstrated a particular activity. A closer interpretation would have resulted in a demonstration of safe sex techniques. The sequence with the school nurse provided such a demonstration, but most of the project drew on other genres and did not educate about or contribute to the promotion of safe sex practices. The contribution of the interviews, in particular, was not clear. Rosemary indicated that the interviews had not been what they expected, but the questions and contexts were not structured to elicit the kind of answers that would have contributed to the message. The questioning—despite different interviewers—began two thirds of the time with, "What do you think about safe

sex?” This and other questions elicited attitudes, opinions, and admissions, but rarely new information (though the “morning-after pill” was frequently introduced as a topic). Despite a strong purpose, therefore, the project had a relatively weak message.

Agency was particularly interesting in this project because of the degree to which it was strong yet distributed between group members. This project in particular created the need to re-evaluate what it meant for the camera to initiate events. All events—except the off-task ones—were created for the camera, though not necessarily with the camera. The students in front of the camera were always negotiating and working with the camera operator to create events. This negotiation was frequently overt: The students in front of the camera would seek confirmation that it was okay to begin or to move in a particular direction. Much of the negotiation, however, is off camera, and the action started before the camera more than once. The visible action is clearly shaped for the camera by the actors or interviewers and frequently by the microphone. The camera did not, however, play a symbolic role, and during the interviews, it was usually the interviewers who mediated events. Only once did an interviewee speak directly to the camera operator, saying, “Stop the camera.” Though the camera was always part of and the reason for events, it does not solely initiate or independently shape events. Nevertheless, the students clearly assert their own purposes in their uses of the camera throughout production.

By contrast, the students consistently demonstrated poor technical proficiency. Sound was the greatest problem: The interviews were always difficult to hear. Their handheld microphone did not work and the students did not make an effort to acquire better equipment. Similarly, no attention was given to lighting or white balancing. The only indication given to technical concerns was the use of a tripod when re-shooting the introduction. The camera operators, however, had surprisingly steady hands. They demonstrated their lack of skill instead in the frequently meaningless use of pans and zooms. Ed, the student who was usually the camera operator, demonstrated a belief that the interviewer should frequently not be shown, but she tended to do so only partially and did not zoom in or move closer, creating the impression that she was not committed to the belief. There was also a distinct lack of closeup shots, which exacerbated the audio problems.

Similarly, there was an inattention to the look of scenes. Not only was no attention given to aesthetics through most of the project, but Skinny, when asked (in an imaginary communication with the “studio”) whether he was downtown yet, motioned with his arm, saying, “I’m downtown already. See?” All that could be seen, however, was a wall (see Illustration 7). The only indication of beginning to think about aesthetics came when two students re-shot the introductory scenes, trying different locations and one student changing clothes twice. This last suggests that aesthetics had just begun to be considered in the process.

**Illustration 7:** In Project 8, Skinny shows with a movement of his arm that he is “downtown” but nothing shows his location.



Self-expression was far more evident than in the more frequent cooking demonstrations. It was most evident in the students’ attempt to do a project that was meaningful to them—that asserted their position as older students with a sense of responsibility toward the younger students. The project mattered beyond simply meeting class requirements. They also expressed their personalities and opinions throughout in the manner of doing skits and shaping interviews. At some point, each group member appeared on camera and presented a version of themselves.

As perhaps the best project in the class and certainly the one with the most time devoted to it, its potentials and inadequacies reveal more about the program than the students. The project was relatively strongest in terms of agency and self-expression because there were the greatest affordances for these qualities and

little attention was given to other aspects by the students or the program (particularly in Media 1). The strongest promotions were to produce videos appropriate to the assignments, and therefore, it should be no surprise that the greatest differences among this group's three projects related to their genres.

An effort to compare the students' three projects suggests that the strong purpose in the safe sex project led to less attention to aesthetics and less creative camera work. The genre of a "how to video" in general does not promote attention to these qualities. By contrast, their first project, a silent piece, demonstrated more attention to camera work, which seems to have been the goal of the instructor. Scenes were shot multiple times from different vantage points. Their final project, a public service announcement, was more attractive, facilitated by being shot away from school and then being edited but nevertheless showing more interesting camera work and some indications of style. Technical problems but strong storylines were qualities of each project.

The differences in the projects that suggest some development relate most to which activities they undertook and gave the most attention to. The first project reflected experimentation in multiple shots of the same scenes taken from different vantage points. The second project included other people and made less of an effort to shape events—it was more spontaneous—but, in the end, returned to the effort of perfecting a look; this time, however, the "look" was affected through scenery and costumes and the role of the camera was neglected. The

third project was actually edited after trying different perspectives. Thus progress was made by expanding on what activities to include, but there was little evidence that communication was more effective at the end of the three projects—except in the big addition of being acquainted with cameras and editing. The differences between projects appear to relate most to assignments, but they reveal that the qualities promoted by particular genres received the most attention.

### **Development At Boarding High With Wicket And Jerome**

The analysis of Boarding High work is limited first by the fact that students did only one project, which was done over a short span of time. Any development would be minimal, but the quality of work serves both to compare the project to others and to suggest where students were developmentally during production. Little analysis is necessary to determine that Wicket and Jerome were the most accomplished videographers in their course: Two groups did not finish, and the one group that edited a piece produced the project previously described as a stream of largely disconnected images and a dog's bark played with an image of the art teacher laughing. A comparison with projects from the next course, however, requires more effort.

The third course resulted in three comparatively polished projects. A cursory examination leads to the conclusion that they represent a greater facility with digital art. This initial subjective experience is largely due to the fact that

Wicket and Jerome's piece lacks a sound track. The power of music to give a “finished” appearance to a video is dramatic, but the absence of a music track on Wicket and Jerome’s project was not for lack of trying. The music they worked hard to match to images could not be captured by the computer for some unknown reason, so this powerful absence does not reflect their intentions.

It is in terms of a message that these students’ potential is most evident. The students selected only four clips to work with, and together they carried a vague critique of authority. This “critique” was made clear in Wicket's interview: It was intentional. With the students in the other courses, interviews and class discussion failed to elicit such confirmation, which does not necessarily mean that the messages were not intended, but at the least, the students chose not to talk about them. Only one had a clear message, but it was not evident throughout the piece, having a number of unrelated images. Wicket and Jerome’s message was also an indication of self-expression. Jerome's self-expression may have been subverted to some degree by Wicket's, but it was not clear.

Another strength of this project is seen in the student's exercise of agency. It was rarely a shared agency during camera work, however. Each boy initiated most of the events contained in the unedited video, occasionally competing for a turn with the camera or to influence the other’s work. In editing, they shared the capturing process, though perhaps this too was a form of competition with one student operating the computer and the other running the camera. It is suspected

—based on interviews—that Wicket was responsible for most of the editing choices, though this was not evident in observations. More importantly, the editing contributed to the camera work in shaping events. Beyond these measures, the students also displayed initiative in taking a second day to record when other students did not and in finishing a meaningful project.

The aesthetics of the project were not as apparent. Shots were rarely enhanced by the way they were recorded, and there was nothing noticeably striking or unique except for Wicket's continual use of the zoom feature, which he also encouraged Jerome to use. Wicket routinely zoomed quickly in and out, creating a distinct if dizzying look to scenes. He also rotated the camera (a technique used only at Boarding High) and did so while walking. In general, the image was constantly in motion. This tendency existed among all the students at Boarding High, which may have been influenced by both context and possible cultural tendencies as noted by Worth and Adair (1972) among the Navajo,<sup>22</sup> but Wicket's constant movement—exemplified in his use of the zoom—can only be considered a style and one that was unique to him.

Technical proficiency was more of a problem. They had only a digital camcorder and an iBook computer. The features they used were used well, though most settings were automatic. They did not know to turn off the date stamp, so that some of their footage displays the date when it would have been better not to

---

22 Wicket referred to himself as Zuni, and it is not known how similar the cultures of Zuni and Navajo are; this is purely speculative.

have it. (Valic at Suburban High made the same mistake, believing that he could edit it out later.) Their inexperience with the technology was most apparent, however, in how shaky the camera work was—particularly when it was zoomed in. There was no noticeable effort to steady the camera, but some of this problem could be attributed to style rather than a lack of proficiency.

Coherence is a difficult quality to assess in an art video. What stands out in comparing this project with the ones from the following course is the scarcity of clips. As mentioned, there were only four clips, repeated and showing repeated zooming such that the repeats were more difficult to detect. By contrast, the other projects tended to use each video clip only once but used clips with greater similarity and created considerably longer projects: about five minutes as compared to one. It is the repetition—either in clip or locations or pattern—that creates a sense of coherence in these videos.

Therefore, Wicket and Jerome's project indicates that these students—particularly Wicket—had sufficiently adopted the medium to create a meaningful project. Whether this appropriation was related to some transformation of experiences with other media or as a consumer of video is unknown, but these students accomplished more with their project than the others in their course and a similar amount when compared to the students in the following course, who—it should be noted—worked in more favorable circumstances.

### **Development In Suburban High's "The Good, The Bad, And The Techies"**

The development of Suburban High students as visible in the focal project has been discussed throughout the chapter. This group's participation more than the quality of their projects demonstrates their development. But in the final project created officially by Luke, Valic, and Catherine, Luke's development in videography becomes visible, allowing some elaboration. His development is thoroughly tied up with his identification as a "screenwriter" and his role as a home-schooled student experimenting with public schools. As such, his affiliations with school and its students remained loose. The final project was not typical of the school, first, because the roles students officially held usually assured a more equal distribution of participation and ownership. Several students worked alone on their projects, but in these cases they officially worked alone. This project was also unusual because it was the product of an explorative approach to recording, which was clearly discouraged. Lastly, the project was flawed at every level, making it quite unlike the other projects in the class, particularly since the failed hard drive was in no way to blame for the flaws. These unusual characteristics serve to highlight issues around conflicting ideologies that in turn reveal signs of development.

The first conflict arose in the allotment of resources. The project was not fully finished because the students did not have enough time with the computers. The students had to forfeit half the editing time they had reserved explicitly

because the teacher did not believe any student should need that much time, though having only two working computers forced some limits. The project in fact ended up being over seven minutes long and was graded down for exceeding the five minute limit. Many deficiencies of the edited project can be attributed to the time problem, but the project was found to show noticeable deficiencies beyond the editing. These deficiencies do not necessarily convey a lack of development, however. The lack of another project in which Luke was a central participant prevents a search for changes that would clarify the matter. The first project Luke worked on was stronger across characteristics, as was the project Valic and Catherine first worked on, but it is the changes in Luke's participation that mark his development, a development that ran counter to course ideologies such that the conflicts in part produce the deficiencies.

An exploratory approach to recording, while ideal for the purposes of the next chapter, was neither supported by the program nor easily accomplished within its constraints. The level of exploration Luke attempted, in particular, required more time. Luke had only vague ideas of what he wanted from the footage he shot. He could have logged in detail the two hours of videotape he ended up with—that was the assignment—and that might have made selecting clips easier, but that too would have required far more time than they had. The lack of time was an enormous obstacle for this project.

A more ideological obstacle ran throughout the course and failed to prepare Luke for what he was attempting to do. The technological focus of the course emphasized recording under very controlled conditions: using studio lights, multiple microphones, and audio mixers. These tools were not compatible with what Luke attempted to do. On the other hand, he failed to use the information that was given him or to practice some basic techniques he had previously worked on: He did not white balance the camera. He shot with light coming from the back. He stood too far away from people for the built-in microphone to adequately record the sound and made no effort to use other microphones. Perhaps it was a problem of working within such a different context, or perhaps it was simply the difficulty of incorporating so many practices into one's activity when they are taught and practiced apart from meaningful production activity. The course had clearly not worked toward preparing students to act as a solitary camera operator, shooting in a chaotic environment.

The project, nevertheless, contains indications of development because Luke had a low starting point. Luke never displayed technical proficiency within the context of a project. He never worked on a documentary before; conceiving of such a project was even outside his experience in writing screenplays. He tried something different, and like the group at Urban High, trying something new to the producers and new to the program led to more deficiencies than might otherwise have occurred. Luke had no models of how a documentary might be

done within a school. And his decision to work almost entirely on his own added to the obstacles. There are so many attributes to attend to in videography that an inexperienced videographer can be expected to lose sight of some while focusing on others. Thus the video indicates development in communication because of the agency Luke asserted in try to do something that was his: his camera work, his style, his class, and with a genre no other student was observed to try. Moreover, there were signs of self-expression and aesthetics that ran contrary to the dominant ideology of the program. Asserting a message and finding coherence, which are so central to communication, became lost in the experiment of capturing the “reality” of the student news program and diverted by the non-communicative purposes Luke sought. It is these non-communicative purposes that become central to the next chapter.

The analysis of these three cases supports other observations, suggesting that video projects are so heavily influenced by their contexts and the ideologies of their programs that a student's “abilities” are secondary. Therefore agency, self-expression, and efforts to find a style—while important in video communication—can become obstacles to other aspects of development in videography if the dominant program ideology conflicts with the orientation students bring to the class.

### **Chapter 4: Mediation by the Material**

In the previous chapter, dominant ideologies as expressed through constraints and promotions were found to influence student development in multiple ways. This chapter traces students' non-communicative actions. It demonstrates how these choices and other production choices reveal aspects of the student-school relationships. A part of this is about the dominant ideologies and the lesser ideologies that compete with them, though the issue is not to define the ideologies but rather how they confront, evade, or otherwise relate to one another. Moreover, these ideologies are shown to be embodied in material environments, including the people who use them and contest them.

This chapter first considers transcriptions and the decision to not use them. Then the question of how a place mediates activity is explored. The following section turns to de Certeau's distinction between *strategies* and *tactics* and how these can be applied to video work. This analysis in particular demonstrates what students *do* with cameras as they consume a public education. It also reveals new levels of meaning as students alter their activity with the place they occupy. Finally a closer examination of one project from each school is shown to consider what the projects reveal about the students who produced them.

### **To Transcribe or Not To Transcribe**

Transcriptions are useful analytic tools. With this in mind, a detailed transcription of Wicket and Jerome's edited and unedited video was made. It required a great deal of time, and adjustments were necessary in time codes when analysis shifted from using the tapes directly versus within the editing program Final Cut Pro. The manner of transcription was designed with attention to the details necessary for this part of the analysis. After working with this transcription a great deal, it was discovered that the words interfered with seeing the work for what it was. Most concretely, this became evident in the placement of boundaries between events, but more generally the use of the transcription led to a static view of the video project: It became a series of fragmented images with the minute changes from one frame to the next having an augmented meaning. I made additional adjustments to the written document before finally deciding to work directly with the videos and occasionally printing a series of stills to serve as reminders.

The problem is that video is done in real time, and while it is extremely useful to be able to move frame by frame or to slow the speed of play, these actions are ultimately distorting. The application of words to a microscopic viewing distorts the video further. Decisions are made, which seem trivial in the moment, about which actions and which objects to note and which words should note them. For example, Wicket, as previously noted, has the image in constant motion. The effort to note each movement leads to ignoring the smallest moves

while making slightly larger moves seem bigger and more significant than they were. A perfectly elaborated system of criteria for which to ignore and which to note would only further the bias by making some potentially meaningful movements invisible and some meaningless movements seem significant. A distinction between “pans,” left or right movements in which the movement itself had significance, and “shifts,” left or right movements that acted only as an adjustment to what was included within the frame, was attempted, but the effort to decide which shifts were intentional and which were the result of unsteady hands became impossible. Even writing all the audible speech is a distortion because most of it is imperceivable in normal play, and particularly words, once written down, make a stronger impression than they do in the video.

The transcription was finally set aside and all but forgotten. Instead, an ever expanding spreadsheet was used to note basic information such as the breaks between shots and events and various codes that were considered. Although not yet explored in detail, a number of computer programs have been developed that enable multimedia data to be matched with written analysis. Having multiple audio tracks—the original tracks and the narrations students provided—as done in this study would complicate the use of these multimedia programs, but these may facilitate opening the analysis to more people as is the ideal next step. The fact is that the way we experience the “data,” whether as a video played in real

time or in slow motion or in some written form, clearly impacts what is perceived and thus necessitates caution and some reference to the source material.

### **Location, Location, Location!**

Professional moviemakers fly to exotic locations around the world for a few seconds of footage and record many scenes in elaborate studios to control as many of the elements as possible. High school students of video production do not have these kinds of resources. Nevertheless, they have a certain amount of freedom in where they choose to record their projects. A zone, as in the ZPD, ZFM, and ZPA discussed in Chapter 1, is a metaphorical place—an abstract area corresponding to certain activities—but they can frequently be mapped onto real places and supported by the material environment. The environment is composed of many overlapping “places” with boundaries that can be solid or that can shift with the activity. The aim is to consider which of these places become meaningful and visible in student video production.

Worth and Adair (1972) sought culture in the films they studied, and they noted the role of location:

Theoretically, a film can be photographed anywhere, limited only by the time and money available. We do not instruct our students in any way regarding the geographical location and setting of their

film. They can go anywhere they want to. Where they go and what they do shoot, however, is extremely significant. After reviewing film productions made by different groups, a pattern of preferred and proscribed settings emerges. (p. 238)

They found that the Navajo tended to film near their homes while middle-class, graduate students and white, middle-class teenagers filmed in places that were both new to them and faraway from their homes. Black, lower-class teenagers, on the other hand, stayed near their homes during practice—going to such places as basketball courts and vacant lots—and then going to more remote places or altering places through sets for their final projects (p. 238).

The differences they observed provoke the question as to whether video programs might show similar differences. Of course, the school-based programs would be likely to afford fewer options than the courses Worth and Adair were associated with, but programs were selected with a requirement that some choice of location be available to students; some courses are entirely about studio work. As in previously discussed issues, the videos were highly reflective of the contexts in which they were produced, in particular the assignments and selected topics. The evidence suggests that perhaps the ethnic differences in location observed by Worth and Adair were as much a result of context as they were culture.

Boarding High presented a unique setting most obviously in the fact that students lived on campus. That with the absence of constraints led to students

going everywhere on the campus. All students had some shots outside on the grounds. This was heavily influenced by the fact that the door students used to the Art classroom led outside; the door leading further into the building was almost never used. All the groups in the second course went into the Academic Building and wandered the halls. In the third course, when the college interns accompanied them, they did much less wandering, though at least one of the groups went into the Academic Building. One group, the one composed entirely of girls and with a female intern, also went to the students' dormitory. More visits to dormitories were limited by mixed gendered groups, but the buildings' more distant positions, students being from different houses, and possibly negative feelings toward the places contributed to the fact that no other groups went there either. The one video that was about dormitory life had a distinctly negative message about them, which was supported by the comments of one of its producers, giving further evidence that the sentiment about dormitories was negative. In sum, these videos showed all aspects of the school and its grounds, including academic classrooms, music classrooms, and the ground's perimeters.

By contrast, the Suburban High videos showed absolutely no classrooms other than the Television Production classroom nor the perimeters of the school grounds. The outside areas between buildings were a regular place sought for practice and projects in which a nondescript background was desired. The news program frequently used brick walls as neutral backgrounds when they shot

interviews outside the television classroom. They occasionally showed clips from athletic events or a performance, but no videos for the show, the video yearbook, or a beginning class that was observed showed the insides of a classroom or office, the cooking demonstration being the only exception. Numerous videos were shot away from school. The lack of classrooms and offices can be attributed partly to the lack of exploratory videos, but as discussed in Chapter Two, this can also be associated with the disconnect between the program and academics more generally. The peripheries were not shown primarily because they are not visible from the main campus; buildings and trees hide them. The closest students came was in recording car-oriented projects in the student parking lot.

Urban High had slightly more use of classrooms and peripheries. The peripheries were unavoidable in projects shot outside, but only the focal project used classrooms other than those where the courses met. Another project—a news item—was about the college center and so was recorded there, but classrooms were otherwise absent. The locations at both Urban and Suburban Highs were selected more to match the topics of their projects, not having greater freedom to explore. When students were able to record away from school, they frequently chose this option. The course classrooms were used more often because they afforded rearrangement and appropriate furniture for sets. Locations seem to have been selected for very clear purposes.

The pilot data, however, suggested that the choice of location might relate to developmental issues: that students sought student-owned places before venturing into places “owned” by others. It was hypothesized that places with fewer constraints or that in some sense were the places where student culture dominated were comparable to the *third spaces* discussed by Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, & Tejada (1999), metaphorical places where hybrid languages—or in this case, hybrid video uses—could be created that combined the students’ “language” with that of the program. The students’ experiences as consumers of video and perhaps in using video in other contexts would theoretically form a hybrid with what was being taught in students’ initiative to create their own *third spaces*. The question, then, was whether changes in locations would serve as indications of developmental changes or more simply that they would reflect changes in the contexts and purposes of production.

Other research contributed little. The only change *over time* that Worth and Adair (1972) noted was among black, lower-class adolescents. The movement was from places where the adolescents frequently gathered without adults—described as places near their homes such as vacant lots and basketball courts where they can be expected to have experienced few constraints and expectations—to either less familiar or reconstructed places—places more likely to be owned by someone else. They additionally describe these changes in location as corresponding to the shift from practice to final projects (p.238), further confounding potential

development with a change in purpose, as in shift from exploration to purposeful recording.

The general work at Suburban High followed this basic pattern: For the early shots of specific techniques, groups of students sought neutral places between buildings, what could easily be considered student-owned places. Then for their two projects, the locations they chose were specific to what they decided to do and what was available. Quality projects were recorded both on campus and off campus, though there were some indications that projects recorded off campus required a greater commitment. There was one significant indication that the choice of location for practice shots was influenced by developmental issues: Their first recordings were done in as much isolation as possible; each group occupied a different area with buildings blocking their view of one another. In later projects, they increasingly stayed closer to the classroom and in closer proximity to one another. An alternative explanation, however, is that the novel freedom of movement afforded by video work led to students wanting to travel farther, staying nearer when the novelty had worn off.

The first project by beginning students at Urban High found all students again in the student-dominated areas of hallways, stairwells, and grounds. All but one of the projects also involved some kind of chase, apparently being a basic way to show tension, climax, and resolution without sound as was assigned. The affordances of hallways and stairwells, which dominated, are particularly

conducive to movement such as in chases. The fact that the less constraining places outside—not having in-session classes with instructors so nearby—were not used more suggests that the indoor places were selected for the affordances for chases rather than the affordances for distance from institutional agendas. The second projects were shot mostly in the classroom to make use of the kitchen equipment. Therefore, there is little evidence at Urban High that *third spaces* are sought at a physical level.

Boarding High offered an ideal test, because there were fewer constraints and more exploration, but there was also only one project per group. The project by Wicket and Jerome offers a clear time distinction, however, because they shot it over two sessions, a week apart. The analysis of this project could theoretically be very enlightening. What is evident is that the boys mostly did a circular pattern each day, shooting everything that caught their attention as they moved away from the art classroom and back, seeming to move from these basic circles only to seek three specific locations: two that resulted in shots included in the edited piece and one that led them to the music department, where they remained for some time. The pattern of their movements initially seem to suggest that the locations were selected entirely based on context—by what was convenient. Further analysis, however, reveals that all shots were taken in the less-defined places of hallways, outside sidewalks and lawns, doorways, the backs of classrooms, and the music department (where different practices clearly existed).

These students only recorded from locations that could at least temporarily be dominated by their own agendas, places that might be considered *third spaces*.

The focal projects at Urban and Suburban Highs offer similar insights: The students at both schools nearly always remained in student-owned places or in the *spaces*—like doorways—between or on the peripheries of places. The only exception is one classroom in which the Urban High students interviewed members of a class from the teacher-owned front of the classroom; these events recorded in this location are considered in more detail in the section about classrooms. What is remarkable is how unusual it was for students to record in more constrained places. A cursory examination of other video projects reveal that there were only four instances in which students recorded in the areas normally occupied by a teacher or other staff member, and two of these were in the “safe sex” project from Urban High. The third was the Urban High news story about the college center, and the fourth was a project at Boarding High in which staff members were briefly shown as they sat at their desks. The comparative prevalence of such locations in the pilot data seems best attributed to the context of recording after-school or during the “PM” school, an after hours program in which the school was mostly empty.

The potential for development to become visible through the choice of location and placement within locations is thus far supported only when students are “practicing” or, in other words, when the location does not matter. When

working with greater purpose, students were generally found to seek places that had the least constraint while still enabling necessary activities. The chosen places offered a number of affordances: Activities are more easily visible from the peripheries, movement requires space to move in, and student tend to be most interested in what is outside staff dominated places. The context—in terms of assignments, purposes, and affordances of the location—had more to do with the choices students made than any developmental or “cultural” reasons.

Of course, the focal students did not produce many projects or truly become experienced videographers. Given more time working with cameras, students may have sought places where the ideology embodied in it conflicted with their own. Perhaps also their lack of interest in staff dominated places is an indication of their relationships with school. Therefore, the supposition that a *third space* in videography is sought at a physical level is supported only by the observation that practice work is generally done in the least constraining places and that subsequent work also avoids constraint, but whether it is the constraint of an ideology imposed by an authority or merely the absence of affordances that led to choices will require additional research. A microanalysis of videos is necessary to derive more about the meaning and uses of places.

### The Meaning Of Bounded Areas

For the purposes of this dissertation, *places* are distinguished from locations as existing on a semiotic level. Places are seen as influencing development and embodying culture. They are viewed as one manner in which the macro- and microgenetic processes remain connected (Latour, 1996). These physical areas are defined by some sort of boundary that may or may not be obvious. Eisenhart (2001), in discussing what culture means in a postmodern world, referred to several different uses of boundaries and borders: from Fred Erikson, “the permeable boundaries, or the ‘partial boundedness’ of culture” (p. 17), the lack of household and community boundaries Shirley Brice Heath found upon her return to previous research sites (p. 17), and the “fixed boundaries and porous borders” of Michelle Fine and Lois Weis (p. 23). Valsiner (1997) built upon the work of Kurt Lewin in developing his conceptualization of “zones.” Some zones have sharp boundaries, but “the majority of zones that enclose areas of space are *partially discontinuous* and *unevenly bounded*” (p. 187). Thus a microanalysis of student videos can reveal the places differentiated by it producers within locations. Defining the boundaries will depend on the camera operator’s movement but can expect to be complicated by the discontinuity of many boundaries.

In this analysis, the ideological complex is sought as a manifestation of the fluid “culture” of school. In particular, the analysis seeks additional information

about the relationship between students and school. In many ways, however, the relationship is revealed in the meaning students find in places because these places are frequently part of the metaphorical zones that shape student development. The microanalysis of excerpts from the focal videos reveals aspects of the student-school relationship in a few moments of interacting ideologies excerpted from a long history. The history is both in the places occupied and the persons who occupy them, but the moments are fleeting. A series of moments reveal patterns, but the video frequently has only one or two instances of a place. Thus it is in the comparison between projects and with observation that enables patterns and distinctions to be considered. What is most apparent is that students occupy the undefined or ambiguous areas between places far more than places.

### **Classrooms**

Classrooms were not as present in student videos as anticipated based on pilot data, nevertheless an analysis of classrooms are central in efforts to understand and improve schools. Little research was found that investigated the meaning of places within classrooms or their material environments more generally, though clearly, early childhood educators have focused on classroom arrangements. Little of this research is relevant to high schools, however, because the diversity of places in early childhood classrooms are rarely found in secondary schools. Instead, this diversity is spread out throughout the school, different classrooms

having distinct structures and equipment. This difference tends to shift the control from teachers to administrators.

The focal video from Urban High (Project 7) contained three shots in classrooms, and the group, while playing at the end of the term, recorded an additional seven shots in a classroom. There was one relatively lengthy shot (73.73 seconds, the longest shot in the sequence of interviews that averaged 29.89 seconds) that conformed to a general pattern observed in pilot data. The shot (Segment 86 out of a total of 203 segments across the three focal projects) will be discussed throughout the chapter. It involved eight events and four “interviews” consisting of one to two questions. The classroom in which it was recorded was not observed apart from this segment, nevertheless typical activities and the relationships of its occupants can be detected.

Classrooms are most clearly divided into *places* by the furniture that creates areas where movement is and is not possible. The furniture is clearly divided by that which is occupied by teachers and that which is occupied by students, though student access to teacher places varies with the classroom. Segment 86 was shot in a classroom that was filled with furniture, limiting movement, and has indications of being a room where teacher-owned places and student-owned places are highly defined. An important difference between this project and others considered in this research is that it involved a camera operator and an interviewer working in cooperation. Nevertheless, like many shots in the pilot

data, the students *borrowed* the teacher-owned places in the front of the classroom—with all the student desks turned toward them—as the interviewer used the freedom that comes with “being” the teacher to move around the room. The boundary between the teacher-owned and student-owned places were porous and crossable, but other students were bound to their desks. A clear limit on the group’s use of the teacher’s area was visible when the camera turned to show the teacher sitting at the very front, facing the classroom.

**Illustration 8: Still Shots from Project 8, Segment 86, Showing Skinny’s Position During Classroom Interviews**



Still 1



Still 2



Still 3



Still 4

The camera operator occupied the spot between the teacher and the student desks and remained there throughout the segment. The interviewer

(Skinny) stood between the teacher's desk and the student desks at the beginning, moving into the student area twice and then toward the teacher. Skinny was the only one to move, acting as an arm of the camera as he designated who could speak by pointing the prop microphone toward them. By following the direction of the camera and the location of both it and the subject, the negotiation of power and solidarity are visible. Refer to Illustration 8.

The camera and interviewer demonstrate solidarity as they share the same powerful but ambiguous place that is part of the teacher-owned place but on its periphery (Still 1). Skinny stands sandwiched in the space between the teacher's desk and the student desks, and both interviewer and camera are within the same semi-bounded area. Skinny then moves among the students, carrying the power of the camera and his previous location with him but demonstrating solidarity by sharing his power to speak with him (Stills 2 and 3). Skinny emerges from the student desks to bring the camera to the teacher, who is sitting but still dominates by facing the class, able to monitor all the interviews (Still 4). The teacher shows solidarity with the students and shares her power by also not occupying the center of the teacher-owned place. She grasps the microphone Skinny holds out to her to confirm her position but Skinny has the power of height. Thus each of the positions and movements relate a constant negotiation of their relations.

This classroom was special, however. The students did not utilize the power of location in any other classroom. In other interviews, they once were on

the periphery of a classroom, and another time, they stood near the door and recorded into the back of the student desks. Their off-task shots were taken in a chemistry classroom always from a student position, sitting at a table. Only once from this data was a teacher's position—the place of power in a classroom—occupied. Not all classrooms have such a clearly distinguished place of power, but all the other segments that included a classroom were clearly not in such a position and most were found to be on the borders of whatever places they approached. (Some of these will be discussed with the general discussion of the projects at the end of the chapter.) The students who were studied, unlike one student in particular from the pilot study, demonstrated no intention to use the structure of a classroom to influence activities except in this one segment. In every other segment of the focal projects, *places* were less permanently defined and more student-owned.

### **Hallways And The Grounds**

Hallways and school grounds played a greater role in student videos, and this is consistent with Hemmings' (2000) findings that students structure the culture of these areas—to make them a place for learning and applying “illicit practices” (p. 5). Students who were observed in these three programs did not, however, seem to use these areas for any “illicit” activities, but they were important places—mostly because of the *space* they afforded them. In examining the focal projects,

only the one from Suburban High did not make use of the hallways and grounds, being recorded entirely in the Television Production classroom. For the other two schools, major differences in meaning and uses were apparent.

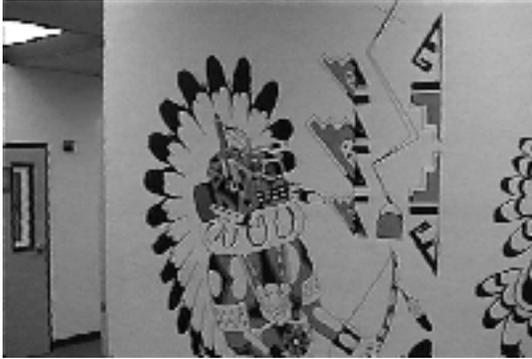
At Urban High, the hallways—as already discussed—were important for their first assignment: Its structure as a path with hard boundaries but few other constraints—physical or otherwise—was important for the chases that most projects contained. The hallways were useful in a way that the grounds were not. In “Sex Talk,” however, the differences were muted as the students’ purposes changed. The hallways and grounds were a means to find students to interview—a means to move around the school and find people who were not engaged in other activities—and the differences in affordances were unimportant. In terms of the methodology, it was the narration provided by its producers that yielded the most information because students labeled different areas by how students saw them rather than their official names. One area was referred to first as something inaudible (perhaps in Spanish) and then clarified as “the uncool part of the school.” The “senior quad” was later referred to as “freakville,” where the “cutters,” the “people on the edge” or “who want to be on the edge” hang out. These references were elicited by the videos they created and my direct question about the location rather than being inherent to their activity in these places.

The video from Boarding High communicated a great deal more about the hallways and grounds, and this was because the students were less goal oriented

—most of the video seemed to be off-task—and because they were far more oriented toward the material environment. The areas served the same basic purposes in being less constrained and routes toward finding people. The meanings about particular places in hallways and on the grounds, however, are both more frequent and more personal. Many items—murals, displays, and a sculpture—are distinguished as being of interest, and some become part of an oral and visual dialog that defines places within locations that are primarily for movement. These *places* have no clear boundaries and may go unrecognized by many people.

The murals, for instance, frequently became more than background decoration. In one project, a girl pretended to open a “door” painted on the wall and enter the mural. Jerome showed a mural while Wicket labeled it a “boogeyman.” He defined it as “a Hopi style.” Jerome turned the camera toward him and said, “It’s your tribe!” while Wicket repeated that it was a Hopi style and ducked out of the way. Wicket was one of the few who was interviewed and defined himself clearly as belonging to a tribe, Zuni, thus the mural was significant in defining Wicket’s identity as not-Hopi and in the relationship between two boys who were not of the same tribe. See Illustration 9 for images from the shot. Similarly, a rose garden provided the stimulus and visual for a poem, “Roses are dead, Violets [violence?] are blue, What the hell is wrong with you?”

**Illustration 9: Stills From Jerome's Day 1, Shot 1, Project 15, in which the mural becomes a defining point for Wicket's identity.**



Still 1



Still 2

The hallways and grounds were thus places that were dominated by students, but they were clearly not consistent in their meaning or ownership. Nevertheless they consistently held places that afforded the activities students sought, whether they were planned or impromptu, object related or person oriented, selected for its characteristics or lack of characteristics. The variety of ways in which students were found to use such places provide strong evidence that having places away from institutional agendas and staff supervision promotes development at least to the extent that students can more readily seek personalized activities.

### **Doorways, Windows, And Other Borders**

A number of places within the schools were found to be similar to the hallways and grounds in that they are relatively unconstrained and they take on a special significance for students, but they become places only for moments. They should

more properly be considered *spaces*, the areas between places that are inevitably contested. They are very similar to student-owned places in that their institutional purposes do not dominate and frequently are unspecified, but there is no indication of a consistency in their uses beyond that of allowing access in one form or another to a place without actually entering it, but this access was used in many different ways.

Doorways and windows figured most prominently in the Boarding High projects and particularly so in Wicket and Jerome's project. Open doorways in particular played an important role: They were frequently occupied to enable interaction with people inside classrooms. Sometimes they moved passed the door but remained within the general area, indicating the transient nature of their activity. They took such a position several times to tease the students on the inside, ready to make a quick departure if a teacher raised an objection. They also used doorways to look for people they were friends with. The doors to buildings were recorded by Wicket as he and Jerome moved through them, becoming places to play with perspectives by rotating the camera and zooming in and out. Going through or even looking through doors often marked a transition between events.

Being on the peripheries of places was also common but had a distinct impact on activities. Two of the interviews by the focal group at Urban High were done on the peripheries of classrooms, but these spaces were used in exactly the same way as the hallways and grounds were. Luke, on the other hand, in "The

Good, the Bad, and the Techies,” was always on the edge of a place or in the space between places when he recorded. This may have been necessary to show the activity within places, but as shall be discussed in the section on this project at the end of the chapter, there were instances when the affordances of his location failed to serve his purposes, particularly given the difficulty of hearing someone speak in a busy classroom when using only the camera’s built-in microphone.

Windows and closed doors with glass could not be occupied exactly, but they were used to gain visual access to places without actually entering. Most commonly, this act allowed the camera to show people without their awareness. One more satirical use of it appeared in “The Good, the Bad, and the Techies” from Suburban High: The door to the control room was closed directly in front of the camera in an act of pretending to shut it out, but the show of two students wrestling continued as the camera recorded through the window. More self-consciously, “Perspectives” from Boarding High (Project 16) used a window that had been blocked to reflect the production team, transforming it into a mirror to gain visual access to themselves.

The meaning of such indirect access for the audience is demonstrated in Illustrations 10 and 11. The first set of images is from the drunk driving PSA by the focal group at Urban High (Project 9), and the second set of shots is also from a drunk driving piece from Suburban High (Project 4). Both projects make use of shots recorded from a variety of positions. They are shown in the order in which

they occur, but poor lighting makes the images—particularly as stills—difficult to understand. The differences are particularly effective when the videos—with motion—are seen.

**Illustration 10: Still Shots from Urban High Drunk Driving PSA, Project 9, showing different positions for recording a car's driver**



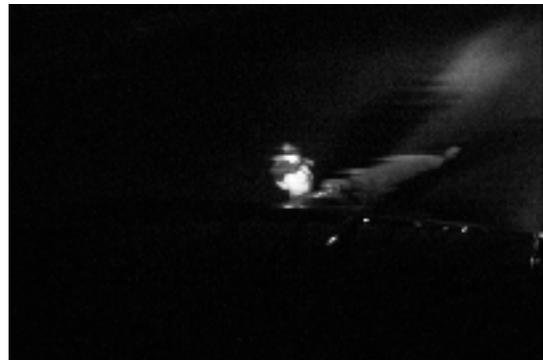
Still 1: Recorded from the back seat



Still 2: Recorded from side exterior



Still 3: Recorded from front exterior



Still 4: Accident scene from interior

The shots of the drivers taken from outside the vehicles contrast sharply with the ones in which the camera operator was positioned inside the cars. They also have influential height differences: The Urban High project shows the driver from above, creating power differences and a lack of solidarity, while the Suburban High project shows the driver from a level, almost lower, position, thus equalizing the power and decreasing the distancing effect of the glass. Being

**Illustration 11: Still Shots from Suburban High Drunk Driving Commercial, Project 4, showing different positions for recording a car's driver**



Still 1: Recorded from front exterior



Still 2: Recorded from passenger seat



Still 3: Recorded from passenger seat



Still 4: Accident scene from interior

outside the car, even with the window open and particularly from above as in Still 3 in Illustration 10, creates a distance—a lack of intimacy with the driver that for the purposes of the projects allows the audience to simply observe. The shots taken inside the car (Illustration 10, Still 1, and Illustration 11, Stills 2 and 3), on the other hand, places the audience in the car. The effect of being beside the driver in the Suburban High piece communicates a greater sense of solidarity and equality, whereas being in the backseat in the Urban High project communicates a powerlessness and distance. If these projects were not as scripted and edited as they were and did not include such contradictory messages, these could be taken as indicating more about the relationships of the people involved.

Video, unlike still photography, records responses of the “voyeur” who uses windows. This happened multiple times in the focal project from Boarding High and provides a hint of how students use the material environment even when they do not have a camera. In one noteworthy shot, Wicket and Jerome looked at two security officers through glass and make jokes. Wicket yells, “Stop us!” Jerome comments, “Trying to bust somebody.” Wicket yells, “Stop us!” again and then continues, “We have no pass!” At the same time Jerome says, “Stop the hate crimes.” See Illustration 12 for an image from the shot. In different ways, they use the sound barrier between them and the security officers to make jokes about their relationship with them. It is in moments like this one that one potential of the video camera materializes that is particularly salient in defining the student-school relationship. I give this type of activity the term *video graffiti*.

**Illustration 12: Boarding High Video Graffiti from Project 15**



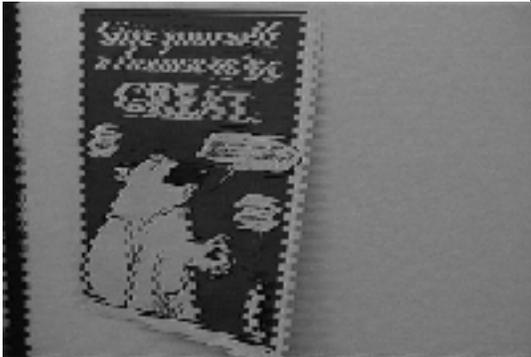
## Video Graffiti

Hodge and Kress do a revealing analysis of graffiti on a billboard that demonstrated the contradiction in an ideological complex (1988, p. 8-12). *Video graffiti* similarly alters the meaning of events and artifacts through the use of narration and in the use of camera techniques such as a zoom or rotation. These acts demonstrate the power of the camera to shape meaning by distorting what is embodied in an object, person, or event and, in so doing, reveal two sides of the ideological complex. These video clips demonstrate the *uses* of the material environment that are usually so difficult to document. Even more so than in the television show “Mystery Science Theater 2000,” in which characters joke about a movie as it plays, “consumers” have a chance to talk back when they hold a camera. Aspects of this form of graffiti appear in many projects, but only the focal project from Boarding High provided clear examples in this study.

The clearest case of video graffiti is in a shot that consisted entirely of a “dialog” with items hung on a wall. One item shown is a poster that says, “Give yourself a chance to be great!” and has a cartoon of a polar bear and a penguin. See Illustration 13 for the images. Wicket reads the bubble above the bear, which says, “Who me?” He then turns to leave but changes his mind—an intention visible in the pan of the camera away and quick pan back to the poster. Instead of reading what the bubble above the penguin, which says, “Whose then?” Wicket gives it his own words, “And the penguin says, ‘Yes, you. Yes, you!’” emphasizing

it with zooms in and out. He then laughs as he turns to see what Jerome has been trying to call his attention to. (A second bubble above the bear says, "Hey, it's not my responsibility!")

**Illustration 13: Stills From Wicket's Day 1, Shot 3, of a poster that was transformed**



Still 1



Still 2

The difficulty in analyzing this exchange, however, is that details about the poster are not known. Knowing who is trying to inspire students—both in terms of the organization which published the poster and the staff member who chose to display it—and toward what specific end—whether it be further education, military enlistment, or staying off drugs—would complete the picture of one side of the ideological complex. In a study that focuses in more detail on one school such background could be investigated, but under the current circumstances, there is only the video to provide information. And this also does not provide evidence as to whether Wicket was aware of the poster's purpose. Wicket describes his own actions as “just kinda fooling with it.” Unlike the billboard with graffiti that Hodge and Kress analyzed, which was part of a campaign against tobacco, the students had no clear purpose in creating this transitory graffiti.

Nevertheless, Wicket's actions animated the poster for a short time and suggest an unwillingness to accept such motivational slogans uncritically. More importantly, it is a clear example of a type of video use to look for.

Within Wicket and Jerome's project, there are several examples of video graffiti, though the one described is viewed as the clearest. Another clip has similar properties and yields more information about the student-school relationship. In it, a student is shown hiding from the same security officers seen in another part of the video, and Wicket provides a commentary, but this will be discussed in the section that focuses specifically on Boarding High at the end of the chapter. One problem for the methodology, which must be addressed, is that few projects had such clear examples of video graffiti. Several projects at Boarding High contained at least one incident, but none of the projects from the other schools were observed to. The reason for this difference is clear: Only at Boarding High did the circumstances permit students to explore the school with the camera. It was most similar to the pilot data—which also included video graffiti—because most projects had sequences that are best described as exploration; they had no other aim than to see what there was to see in the school from the camera's perspective. The questions that arise are whether assigning or at least permitting “exploration” would promote such video activity and whether or not the presence or substance of video graffiti is more revealing.

The projects from Boarding High indicate that the presence of an authority figure—the college interns in the third course—reduces the amount of aimless video and video graffiti, in part because the unedited video is more serious. In most of the Boarding High projects, the clips that altered the meaning of objects, people, or events tended to be playful in nature, but “Perspectives,” a project from the third course (Project 16), had what could be considered “serious” cases of video graffiti (as well as recordings of actual graffiti). One clip used in the edited piece was of a patio roof, but it was in no way apparent what was being shown beyond thin boards and shadows. This is a special case of video graffiti because, instead of suggesting new meanings, the perspective removes the context and effectively reduces a purposeful object to an array of lines and shapes. (See Illustration 6, Still 2.) The third course had many examples of this type of activity. Clearly, the presence of a staff member reduces the amount of exploration undertaken and the playfulness, but it is not clear that the presence of video graffiti is affected.

The distinction between playful and serious graffiti as well as that between applying new meanings versus removing the meaning asserted by the context offer a beginning to a deeper understanding. These can be supplemented by whether an act is directed toward an object, person, or event, but this is only a beginning. More important than the potential types, however, is the message inherent in these acts. As in other cases of graffiti, an alternative ideology is

expressed in video graffiti that does not encompass all possible perspectives but adds to what is most obvious. Some of these will be meaningful in the attempt to define student-school relations, and some will not. Additional research is required to understand more about the nature of video graffiti and its potential. Another layer of analysis is necessary to fully explore the cases presented in these projects.

### **Participation Styles And The Further Definition of Places**

Much of this dissertation has been inspired by de Certeau's work (1984) and his effort to define how people *use* the environments, the cultures, the *products* they *consume*. In this sense, students are "consumers" of the education prepared and presented by the institution of school, and development is sought in the way students use the products. Development is not in the system of buildings, objects, and people that create particular affordances but in the activity—the uses to which affordances are put. Defining the system of constraints and promotions defines only the conditions under which development occurs, not the developmental processes. It is only in considering the whole ideological complex, including the pieces the students bring to it, that a zone can be defined. And the way to begin, according to de Certeau, "is to make explicit the systems of operational combination" (p. xi) through an elaboration of *strategies* and *tactics*.

A strategy is defined as:

the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject of will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a *place* that can be delimited as its *own* and serve as the base from which relations with an *exteriority* composed of targets or threats (customers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives and objects of research) can be managed. (De Certeau, 1984, p. 35-36)

A strategy at its most basic is understood as an act taken from a position of power. The act is literally or metaphorically positioned within a place such that the power of an institution (school, media, or student body) is contained in its objectives. By contrast, a tactic, understood loosely as an act taken from a position of weakness, is more properly defined as:

a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. (p. 37)

Thus a teacher is able to use the classroom as a place where the proper activity is aimed toward education, and a student uses *time* to create opportunities, to divert

agendas, to find holes in the teacher's surveillance. These associations of a strategy with a *place* and a tactic with *time* are essential elements of de Certeau's distinction.

This is, however, a simplification. De Certeau used the metaphor of war to describe everyday life, and he indicated that actions may “never present themselves in such a clear form” (1984, p. 39). The fact is that a *place* always belongs to the institution, not the individual, and to some degree, an individual is always left to tactics. Particularly in looking at student activity within schools, all the activity is by definition tactical—students are in a position of weakness in the school. The places referred to as student-owned places are more borrowed than owned. Students take advantage of the lack of surveillance and a momentary placement to “own” a hallway or a desk. The teacher also borrows the places provided by the institution, most obviously when teachers also must move from one classroom to another. It is the institution of teacher-hood or student-hood that owns the place. Nevertheless, individual (though not isolated) actions can be characterized as more or less strategic, more or less tactical, and in so doing, the quality of relations between the actor and the actants is revealed. By elaborating on the way students use their schools, the student-school relationship—not just the school's relationship toward the students—becomes visible. The focus of an analysis according to de Certeau's approach is undertaken primarily with student-

made videos because of the level of detail that is thus made available and because of the material yet potentially symbolic nature of video activity.

### **Extending De Certeau**

Students' uses of a video camera are remarkable because of the freedom it provides from some of the normal constraints—particularly the constraint upon movement—empowering them to reveal and change their positions within the school. Thus far, the discussion has focused on how the choice of position and changes over time in position suggest new information about the schools and development, but these merely demonstrate a material presence; it assumes that a position determines the meaning when it is how students *use* their placement that more accurately defines the meaning of relations at that time in that place. As de Certeau wrote, “‘Trajectory’ suggests a movement, but it also involves a plane projection, a flattening out. It is a transcription” (1984, p. xviii). And transcriptions can distort what is seen. In using de Certeau’s distinction between strategies and tactics, a deeper question about how students use video cameras within school can be asked; this basic distinction is a beginning point from which *uses* can be elaborated upon, patterns and exceptions to the patterns sought, and changes in student activity traced.

At the same time, de Certeau’s assertion that power is associated with the delineation of a place can be investigated. To what extent does a place limit the

power of the people who merely occupy it? To what extent can individuals gain power through strategic placement in institutionally defined places? To what extent can innovations like video cameras re-write the limits on the power afforded by a place? Are their aspects of position, such as height, that affect the constraints imposed by a particular place? And what of the other relational quality asserted by Hodge and Kress (1988), solidarity? Do places and positions within them constrain and promote levels of solidarity?

The distinction between strategies and tactics is a starting point for answering these questions. It is particularly useful because it mirrors the use of power by schools to constrain and promote particular activity: Strategies and tactics are two approaches to the constraint and promotion of student activity with constraint being more strategic and promotion containing tactical qualities (i.e. nurturing solidarity to promote concern for equipment). The distinction between strategies and tactics when applied to student actions demonstrates moments of appropriation, evasion, resistance, and cooperation on the part of students and potentially reveals the microgenesis of activity.

Activity with a video camera changes student participation by forcing a level of observable activity on students who choose to participate, simultaneously offering them new affordances for communicating power and solidarity. Students take on new roles and can alter the meaning of places for at least the duration of their recording. The use of a video camera, though at heart a tactic, can be used

in both strategic and tactical ways. But defining what should be considered a strategy or a tactic became increasingly difficult as more video was considered, particularly when elements of strategies and tactics were combined. De Certeau's own inattention to concrete strategic activity further clouds the issue. It is speculated that this was due to the impossibility of an individual acting in an entirely strategic manner, the "system" being under the control of no one. Individuals clearly asserted power in their use of video cameras, however, and these assertions can be conceptualized as strategies regardless of the power formally accorded this person.

The extension of de Certeau's (1984) definitions were grounded in his analysis of "walking in the city," which was contrasted with standing atop the World Trade Center.

To be lifted to the summit of the World Trade Center is to be lifted out of the city's grasp. One's body is no longer clasped by the streets that turn and return it according to an anonymous law; nor is it possessed, whether as player or played, by the rumble of so many differences and by the nervousness of New York traffic. When one goes up there, he [or she] leaves behind the mass that carries off and mixes up in itself any identity of authors or spectators. An Icarus flying above these waters, he [or she] can ignore the devices of Daedalus in mobile and endless labyrinths far distant. It

transforms the bewitching world by which one was “possessed” into a text that lies before one’s eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god. (p. 92)

The visual nature of this example makes it particularly salient in the analysis of video. The video camera allows students to select between perspectives that—as in standing atop the World Trade Center—strategically display the organization of a place or that tactically demonstrate the use of a place. Professional movies will often contain clear *displays* by using an “establishing shot” that locates the events that follow, but the way actual events are shown rarely have a truly tactical quality. One exception that was mentioned by Luke was the movie *The Blair Witch Project* that inserted the videographer’s non-communicative movements, thus communicating an individuality and presence in the camera operator that is usually not included in films.

Shots that clearly established a location with a strategic display or that related the experience of the camera operator were more common in pilot data than in the other programs, suggesting that the constraints of the programs led to a narrower range of camera uses even if the range of genres employed was far wider. A few clear examples of strategic displays and tactical uses can be found. Illustrations 14 and 15 provide an example of each from Wicket and Jerome’s project at Boarding High. Most events, however, are ambiguously between these extremes, sometimes including elements of each.

**Illustration 14: Strategic Displays**

Three stills from an event in Project 15 that zooms out, pans right, and stops on “the honors dorm,” showing the placement of the dorm on the grounds.



Still 1



Still 2



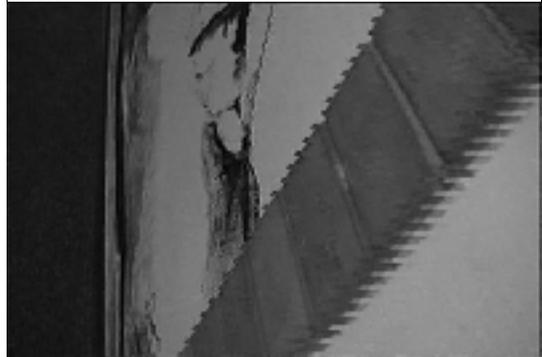
Still 3

**Illustration 15: Tactical Uses**

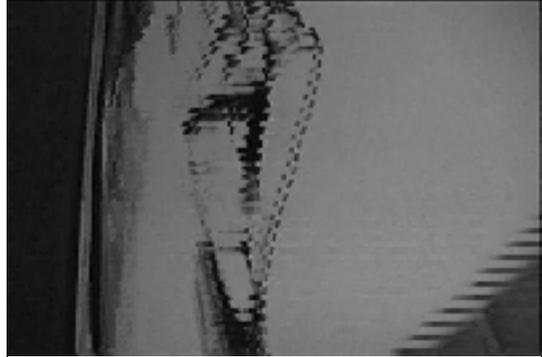
Three stills from an event in Project 15, described by Wicket as “how people act if they’re drunk,” which includes walking and a tilt down to show part of a mural.



Still 1



Still 2



Still 3

The ambiguity of de Certeau’s general distinction when applied to most of the video obtained for analysis led to the dissection of the concepts *strategy* and *tactic* in terms of video. Table 9 lists the criteria arrived upon and shows how they are theoretically aligned. The aim in this discussion is to consider how—in the abstract and in the focal videos—these criteria are meaningful and under which circumstances they are not. The purpose is to develop a methodology for tracing the microgenesis of social relations and eventually for connecting these series of moments with the level at which students are more commonly evaluated—in terms of their general performance—but such conclusions are made only tentatively at the present.

**Table 9: Camera Operator Actions According to the Strategic/Tactical Dichotomy**

Strategic Act	Tactical Act
visual display of spatial organization	subjective camera movement (i.e. walking)
visual marking of physical structure	distortion of appearance, evasion of structure, or overcoming a boundary
oral definition of subject	oral redefinition of subject
placement within a position of power	placement within a position of weakness
direct effect on activity	indirect effect on activity

The visual display of a place’s structure and its opposite—the movement of the camera through space such that the experience of the “pedestrian” becomes visible—are theoretically distinct, but the vast majority of shots from this study do

not fit clearly into either category. Most camera actions as promoted in courses and manuals are displays on a smaller scale. They display a particular activity, person, or object without any interaction. This notion of display dominates in professional uses of the camera. Students are taught to set up the camera and the scene to make the clearest and truest image, placing all the attention on technical aspects. The use of a tripod—thus constraining movement—is encouraged: “Unmotivated” movements should be avoided (Zettl, 1995, p. 89). But all motion, including the pan in the shot from Illustration 14, bare some resemblance to the enactment of normal pedestrian movement. As Gibson (1986) described it, moving pictures are like our experience of the world: The movement of a pan is like the turn of a head, a tilt is like the tilt of a head, a dolly or a truck is like taking a few steps in one direction or another, and even a zoom resembles the narrowing and widening of attention. For this reason, events with only clear qualities of strategic display or tactical movement are thus categorized and the rest are considered only in terms of having these elements.

The elements considered are listed in Table 10. Their strategic or tactical nature is theoretical, based on de Certeau’s (1984) examples or the criteria considered by Hodge and Kress (1988). A downward or upward tilt, in this study, was found to be only a result of the camera operator’s height as compared to the subject, but this is not necessarily so and does not negate the possibility that it has an effect. Similarly, whether or not the camera frame was aligned with the

structures in the environment, for instance when an additional frame was created by the inclusion of a door frame, seemed to be largely accidental, and the frequency of shooting where the built structure provided many straight lines to be either reflective or contradictory of the camera frame obscured any potential meaning. The four ways in which distance—actual or apparent—could vary creates some potentially rich meanings, though it is not clear whether it relates more to power or solidarity. As Hodge and Kress (1988, p. 41) indicate, a close-up or being near the subject can be a sign of “intimacy” but it can also be a sign of “hostility” while long shots or actual distance can be a sign of “respect” or “deference.” In pilot data, extreme closeups gave an absurd look to some shots, but in this study, the use of distance generally seemed void of meaning. An examination of other shots and the context provides evidence of when such elements are meaningful.

**Table 10: Camera Operator Actions According to Potential Strategic or Tactical Effect**

Elements of Strategic Acts	Elements of Tactical Acts
downward tilt (being higher)	upward tilt (being lower)
wide angle view or zooming out	telephoto view or zooming in
camera frame aligned with environment	camera frame contradicting environment
great distance from subject	short distance from subject
focal person/object in long shot	focal person/object in close-up
movement away from subject	movement toward subject
subject movement from camera	subject movement toward camera

Returning to the list of strategic and tactical camera actions in Table 9, “visual marking” was found to be a frequent companion of visual displays. The example given in Illustration 14 is described as containing a zoom out from the previous subject, followed by a pan right to and pause on the honors dorm. Not described was an abrupt but small zoom-in after the pause. The abruptness of the zoom-in suggests it may have been an accident, but the pause and small zoom-in are consistent with a pattern that appears to mark the subject—to distinguish the subject from the background. The techniques visually indicate what should be looked at. On the tactical side, there are several ways in which the meaning of a place is distorted or overcome. Wicket, in particular, had a distinct technique for distorting the appearance of his subjects; he zoomed in and out rapidly and repeatedly in a way that resembled the use of special effects in pilot data. Overcoming boundaries was first noted in the pilot data when students got past closed doors and school perimeters by shooting through windows and fences. There were also examples of these in this study. The “evasion of structure” was added in an effort to seek similar but distinct acts. Several events are noted in this study in which a place is stripped of its usual meaning by cutting parts out, rearranging furniture, and creating sets.

Another way of marking or defining the structure of a place is to do so orally. The voice becomes a tool of the camera operator for affecting how events are perceived, a tool that can articulate institutional power or subjective

experiences. The strategic display example (Illustration 14) also contained this technique; Jerome said simply, “For the honor students.” If he had stopped there, this would have been a thoroughly strategic event, but he quickly added, “Smartass motherfuckers anyway,” tactically introducing a subjective experience that alters the intended institutional meaning of the place. Thus Jerome used both a strategic and tactical narration, giving voice to both institutional and personal ideologies and providing two sides of the ideological complex. While it was not common for narration to so rapidly include both a strategy and a tactic, it frequently became clearly recognizable as one or the other.

The position a camera operator takes is also important. Table 10 considers possibly relevant elements, but places are imbued with the power of the person or people who generally occupy them. To some extent, this has already be discussed, but it is worth noting again. People refer to the “Oval Office” to refer to the power of the United States president, for instance. By occupying a place that is associated with power or a lack there of, a person’s authority in a given activity is potentially influenced.

The criteria in the last row of Table 9 are distinct from the previous ones. They concern specifically the relation of the camera operator to the activity—when such exists—in front of the camera, and these criteria are different because, no matter whether the camera operator acts strategically or tactically toward places and objects, the subjects are not directly impacted. When the subject is

animate, there is the potential for activity to be directly affected by the actions of the camera operator. There is the potential for control, manipulation, and reinterpretation that affects the relationship *and* the actant itself. Direct or strategic actions are those that immediately result in a change or limit on real-time activity, whereas indirect or tactical actions merely affect how the activity is perceived on the video. Note that acts which may be categorized as strategic according to other criteria, i.e. labeling a person, can be categorized as a tactic according to this criteria. Thus the impact on in-front-of-the-camera activity is a separate though closely related question. Most of the criteria relate to the question of how the camera operator is positioned in relation to the audience; it is a question of whether the camera operator embodies what is proper or what is idiosyncratic within the video. The question behind these last criteria concerns the relationship of the camera operator in real time to other participants.

This question raises again the subject of symbolic activity in a behind-the-camera orientation versus the direct activity of an in-front-of-the-camera orientation discussed in the previous chapter. These orientations have been considered as potential indications of development and as a reflection of culture. By adding the issue of power yielded within the recording context, these differences are viewed in relational terms rather than as the orientation of a person or culture. From this perspective, the options that are available and the choices that are made are understood as acts in an ongoing dialog rather than as a

reflection of personal or cultural idiosyncrasies. Additionally, the criteria are distinct: Worth and Adair (1972) and Chalfen (1992) discussed the *location* of activity, and the strategy-tactic distinction leads to a focus solely on what the camera operator does, and without an in depth analysis at this point, these appear to be independent questions. Additional analysis can more specifically address the similarities and differences.

A number of actions were found within the direct-indirect effect distinction. Students frequently used speech to tell people what to do or to provoke a reaction. Speech also was used to define a person or activity without the actors being aware of the pronouncement. The power of the camera was frequently flaunted by showing people who attempted to hide or who protest being shown in some way, and a pan or stopping the recording led to people being cut out who wanted to be recorded. On the tactic side, people were often recorded without knowing they were being recorded and could conceivably be cut out without knowing it, though there are limits on classifying such actions because the camera operator's beliefs about the subject's awareness are critical.

The pilot data, in particular, contained dramatic instances of solidarity—expressions of similarity or alignment—and assertions of difference and disagreement. Though there were fewer such expressions in this study, the criteria for following them were refined and are distinct from the strategy-tactic dichotomy. Table 11 lists the criteria. The need to consider solidarity apart from

power arose in the conceptualization of cooperation. Cooperation with a powerful other can be viewed as a tactic. The person who chooses to cooperate gains something that is unrelated to the activity: The relationship is strengthened, trust is perhaps gained. Whether or not this is eventually exploited in any obvious way, the “good” student gains by experiencing a more positive environment. But to classify cooperation simply as a tactic fails to specify its immediate impact. The dynamic and complex relationship between solidarity and power demands that solidarity be considered in its own right. Thus issues such as identity, intimacy, and isolation can be traced at the microgenetic level.

**Table 11: Camera Operator Actions According to the Level of Solidarity Expressed**

Expression of Solidarity	Expression of Difference
compliance with instructions, suggestions, and actions	ignoring or refusal to comply with instructions and suggestions; stopping actions
oral expression of sameness or agreement	oral expression of difference or disagreement
provoking agreement or pleasure	provoking disagreement or displeasure

Although less dramatic as a whole than in pilot data, this study included instances of each criterion. Compliance was both more subtle and more common, but students were not always cooperative—particularly with one another. The distinction between acts that impact the activity and those that do not is again significant, but they are in some cases more difficult to separate. Cooperation, for

instance, is not always expressly perceived by the others involved, and ignoring an instruction is frequently invisible to the instructor. This distinction is made in the list of acts that is created. It became clear, however, that expressions of solidarity were less meaningful in the absence of animate beings, most significantly because strategic acts toward places or objects are always expressions of solidarity. Uses of places generally demonstrate solidarity as well. It is only in the evasions and distortions that some discord is introduced.

The criteria have been applied sporadically to different video events to more fully distinguish meaningful qualities, and they were applied to clusters of events from different parts of students' unedited work to find similarities and differences over time. This analysis is presented in the next section. The specific acts, however, are so context bound that finding change that resembles "development," even if more projects by the same students shot over a lengthier time period were used, would be difficult to distinguish. This analysis makes evident that power and solidarity are expressed all the time in a variety of recognizable ways that are strongly influenced by the contexts of the material environment, the activity, and the ideologies inherent in these. It remains for the next section to demonstrate how the dialog of actions expresses meaning. Elaborating upon how expressions of power and solidarity and their dialog with institutional constraints and promotions shape *development* begins in the final

chapter, but it is only a beginning. Further efforts should perhaps be guided by Valsiner's suggestion:

In practical terms, a microgenetic study of how the set of possibilities is turned into actuality entails a focus on the efforts that do *not* succeed in the given action sequence (within the context), prior to the success of some other efforts (1997, p. 177).

### **Cases Of Changing Student-School Relations**

This section will apply the criteria from the previous section to clusters of events from each of the focal projects and will explore the meanings of similarities and differences within the work of each group of students. An effort is made to present the microanalysis within the larger context of the relationships these students have with school. Note that throughout, “teasing” holds a significant role in raising tensions to the surface, and as such poses some analytical difficulties. Teasing is always an expression of power and difference, but it is sometimes an expression of solidarity—of friendship—also. This problem is best demonstrated in the focal project at Urban High but can to some extent be resolved by considering these expressions as happening on different levels: Power and difference are expressed by teasing in the immediate. A sustained pattern of such

power struggles and differences are possible only when an intimacy exists are is being established on a longer time scale.

### **Social Relations In Urban High's "Sex Talk"**

Skinny, Ed, Turkey, Lynn, Rosemary, and Abbey were observed to have a generally positive student-school relationship based on their level of participation, regular attendance, and interaction with the teacher, though they rarely interacted with other students in the class, resulting in an isolation that became extreme when an intra-group conflict led to Lynn sitting entirely alone for the last weeks of class. Conflict was observed only within the confines of the group, including comments about other people during the group interview (of part of the group). The usual positive quality and their associated isolation are evident in the microanalysis but largely in the passivity of the camera and routine expressions of solidarity with nearly everyone who appears on camera.

The microanalysis is of the interviews from the "Sex Talk" project, which contain repetition yet spontaneity, therefore presenting an opportunity to consider similarities and differences that are more illusive in the other two focal projects. There are 31 shots containing 30 interviews with a number of variations including length, location, number of questions, number of people questioned, number of shots per interview, number of interviews per shot, the power relations among people, the identity of the interviewer, etc.

All the interviews have an essentially strategic stance to the action in two senses. First the camera *displays* the interviews, but these displays do not include any sort of overview or establishing shot and they do not display the spatial organization. As already described and pictured in Illustration 7, the interviews begin with an assertion that Skinny is “downtown” but does not present an image that places him. The context of the interviews is ignored or manipulated to lessen power differences, thus in this project, the general act of displaying does not truly have a strategic nature. Secondly, an interview, by its very nature, creates an inequality in relations: One person (or persons) is the interviewer and the other (or others) is the interviewee. Nevertheless, this group of students never asserts their own agenda beyond broad questions, and the dynamics of the interviews demonstrate a constant effort to maintain solidarity, thus reducing the power inherent in the activity.

As in traditional camera work, the camera operator (usually Ed) does not ask questions or narrate; there is no direct effect on the interviews beyond the creation of an audience. There is little subjectivity also. The camera gives power to the interviewer, but the camera operator seems to disappear in her role as passive and cooperative audience. The small zooms, pans, and shakes are the only indications that the camera has an operator most of the time. It is for this reason that the slight adjustments have been closely examined for evidence of meaning.

It was found that there were only three true close-ups within the interviews; people are nearly always shown in a medium shot, ranging between a long shot to slightly closer than a standard medium shot. This lack of close-ups is not uncommon in student work but explaining it causes some difficulty. Worth and Adair (1977) assert (with additional evidence) that not showing faces in close-up relates to the culture of their informants. By contrast, the analysis of this project suggests that the lack of close-ups is partly a developmental issue. What became clear after attempting a number of approaches to examining the issue of distance is that not only did the frequency of close-ups increase with time but that in general people were shown in tighter shots as they did more interviews and spent more time recording in general.<sup>23</sup> The major exception to this was when the camera was placed on a tripod and there was no camera operator. The actual distance, however, was influenced most clearly by the number of people present; the camera operator moved closer apparently to either hear what was being said or to reduce the chances of someone walking between camera and subject.

Due to the fact that there simply were not enough interviews or other work and that the movement within a shot tended to be small, the search for additional meanings for actual and symbolic variations in distance remain speculative. There

---

23 The method that was settled on was to draw a circle around the person's face in a drawing program and to note the dimensions. The height from selected images within different sequential clusters were averaged and compared. A more rigorous use of this technique would allow a detailed statistical analysis, but such an analysis was not viewed as contributing meaningfully to the analysis at this time. A way to assign a reliable value to actual distance has not been established.

are not clear differences in camera activity that depend on place or identity of the interviewee or number of interviewees. Nevertheless, the distance between the interviewer and interviewee, particularly the existence or absence of physical contact, is revealing about the nature of the relations between students. Other evidence, such as ways of smiling, supports the conclusions based on distance between interviewer and interviewee. Context, on the other hand, clearly made a difference when off-task images are compared. Illustration 16 shows examples from shots taken during interviews and during off-task recordings from the end of the year. The off-task recordings (by Turkey and Ed) were made in two different classrooms, including the video production room. The recording was not a central part of events but represented play during free time while others talked. Most of the shots were in close-up, and those that were in medium shots were of people busy with their own activities. The general activity and the shots demonstrate greater intimacy. On the other hand, the interviewers tended to be closer to the subjects and were not cut out of the scene. During the off-task recordings, the students sat at tables with more space between people.

The only shot in all their work to include an extreme close-up (see Illustration 17), which in this case is even closer than a normal extreme close-up, was also taken during end of the year, off-task recording. In pilot data, when a student showed a vice-principal in a similar shot, it was taken as a distortion—a tactical mockery of sorts—of an authority figure. This seemed particularly

**Illustration 16: Stills of Skinny, Ed, and Abbey During Interviews and Off-Task Shots that demonstrate differences in shot closeness**



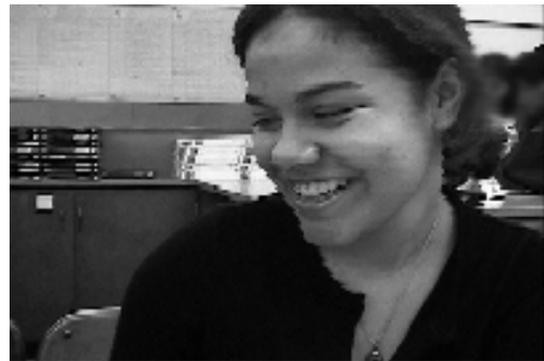
Still 1: Ed being interviewed by Skinny in Interview 12



Still 2: Ed During Off-Task Activity



Still 3: Abbey being interviewed by Skinny in Interview 20



Still 4: Abbey in Off-Task Activity

accurate due to the fact that the teacher had pushed the student into interviewing the man, and the interview itself was conducted by handing the vice-principal a piece of paper with a list of questions on it (Beaty, 1998). Does this shot represent a friend mocking a friend? The students clearly teased one another regularly and were willing to express conflict toward one another, whereas they were never observed on video or in real time to assert a difference with others. Thus this extreme, extreme close-up is interpreted as being an experiment in mockery.

**Illustration 17: The Only Extreme Close-up Shot Taken of Rosemary During Off-Task Activity at Urban High**



The relative passivity of the camera operator and her relationship with the interviewer resulted in the need to consider the actions of the interviewer more generally for a rich analysis. As has already been noted, the camera operator in this project worked in close coordination with the interviewer. The microphone, despite not being useful for improving audio, extended the power of the camera to the interviewer, making her or him a participant in operating the camera. Therefore, the actions of both individuals are worth consideration.

The first interview stands out because the interview is not authentic; Lynn—a member of the production team—is the person who is interviewed. A “fake” interview was also conducted with Ed later on, but this was the first. Interview 1 also stands out because it is one of only three interviews with any kind of introduction to it: Skinny pretended to speak with others in the studio before “looking” for someone to ask about safe sex. This search for people to interview makes it distinct as well. Only this interview and the interview of Ed involved asking someone for an interview while on camera. This in and of itself is an

indication of the level of solidarity regularly expressed by the students: They always sought permission for the interview before recording, and the one time a student asked for the camera to be stopped, it immediately was.



**Illustration 18: Still of Skinny asking Lynn to answer a few questions in Interview 1**

By contrast, one of the few actions that asserts power and conflict also occurs in Interview 1. Illustration 18 shows Skinny holding his hand up to stop Lynn as she walks by. As he lowers his hand, he asks, “Can I ask you a few questions?” This action—the gesture and the words—is viewed as strategic because it causes a direct effect on the activity, but it is also scripted and therefore is not genuinely creating an effect. In the interruption of Lynn’s activity (walking), it represents an expression of difference—a difference in purposes—but this also is not genuine. This type of scripting is less conducive to this type of analysis, but

the fact that more strategic activity occurs only when scripted emphasizes the lack of power and level of solidarity expressed elsewhere.



**Illustration 19: Still Shot of camera operator waiting for student to ready herself for Interview 23**

Another small assertion of power occurs in Interview 23 (see Illustration 19). The girl who is being interviewed was busy spreading cream cheese on a bagel and kept the interviewers waiting 17 seconds before the camera operator turned off the camera and abandoned the interview. Turning off the camera strategically had a direct effect on the activity. A lack of solidarity was also expressed by ignoring (tactically) the girl's instructions to wait. The interviewer or camera operator could have used speech to assert their unwillingness to continue waiting. Whether or not this was expressed more strategically off camera is not known, but the students' on camera actions suggest that their actions remained largely tactical. Thus this shot, as one of the most strategic and hostile, is barely

either, but it is marked as different because the interviewer is not shown. Most events were completely void of strategies and conflict. One of the many examples of a lack of power and high level of solidarity that the students express happens in Interview 2. When Skinny was ready to end the interview, the student being interviewed asked, “That’s it?” So after stopping the camera, they cooperatively started it again, re-shooting the initial question. In this second shot, the interviewee became gradually more expressive until he took hold of the microphone and walked toward the camera (see Illustration 20). Skinny maintained his hold on the microphone but permitted the student to take it also. Skinny was then dragged forward as the interviewee moved toward the camera, and the camera operator showed her cooperation by zooming in on him slightly after he had walked forward. Skinny did not allow the boy to assume power, but neither did he assert his own.



**Illustration 20: Still Shots from Interview 2 that demonstrate the interviewer’s and camera operator’s cooperation with the interviewee’s assertiveness**

The same “sharing” of the microphone happens in Interview 8 with a teacher (though she does not take the microphone quite so aggressively), but in this case, the whole class burst into applause to show their solidarity with the

teacher. The fact that the class was described as an “AP” (advanced placement) class is significant in understanding the quality of relations in this class, including the fact that it was the only class approached for interviews. (The identity of the class was especially meaningful when contrasted with observations of the non-college track New Media courses).



**Illustration 21: Still Shot from Interview 21 in which Skinny lowers himself to mediate height differences**

Other examples would confirm this high solidarity, low power communication. There is a high degree of regularity in the approach these students had in interviewing that illustrates both the strength and the weakness of the students' relations with school. Even when they had the symbolic power of height in Interview 21 (see Illustration 21), it was mediated by the interviewer lowering himself. (In this shot as in every shot from this study, it did not occur to camera operators to adjust their own height.) By kneeling, Skinny shows solidarity with the students sitting on the ground, though his power as interviewer

is not entirely lost; he still asks the questions and holds the microphone. In such events, the students demonstrate no desire to assert power.

Their positive relations with school enabled them to produce the most complete and purposeful project in the class and to discover a new freedom to move around and establish agendas by asking questions. The problem is that the students maintain a simple question-answer format and fail to seek any depth in their interviews. As previously discussed, the purpose of the interviews is ambiguous. This loss of purpose may relate to their avoiding conflict. An avoidance of conflict may also be expressed in maintaining distance, which is seen in their tendency toward actual and symbolic distance. They cooperate so thoroughly with everyone that they are forced to follow the simplest interview genre and take all statements at their surface value, adding additional information rather than seeking questions that will draw out deeper dialog. In this way, the positive student-school relationship seems to support overt participation but to limit their development in communication.

### **Social Relations In Suburban High's "The Good, The Bad, and the Techies"**

Luke was a student whose relationship with school was oddly similar to that of the group from Urban High: He was always positive in his relations with everyone but clearly lacked any genuine intimacy with them. Unlike the students from Urban High, he did not have a group within which to experience intimacy and

conflict. He worked with other students, but somehow, whenever the real work was done, he was either a peripheral participant or on his own. Other students frequently communicated conflict toward him—sometimes with open hostility—but he never in my presence responded aggressively or even assertively. An analysis of his videography reveals similar information, but deepens the sense of how different his participation was from other Urban High students.

But first, the analysis needs to be framed by what he was attempting to do. When asked (several months after working on it due to difficulty arranging a meeting), he described the purpose as simply having fun. He described the advanced class as being fun and its students as being close. While my observations matched in terms of the general atmosphere, they did not in terms of his role in the class. Nevertheless or perhaps because of this, his purpose for the beginning class's final project was a social one. It was officially, however, a documentary, and his understanding of what this meant is clearest when, during recording, he told his classmates, "You're supposed to act like it's [the camera's] not there. It's a documentary." Explicitly, he instructs people to ignore him, so that he can capture the "real" class.

With that in mind, the diversity of shots is surprising. When Luke and Valic edited, they selected mostly interviews and moments when people failed to follow his instructions. Several instances of "eavesdropping"—the shots he seemed to prefer in which people's conversations were recorded without noticeable

performance—and some displays of classroom activity were included, but events in which students spoke to the camera dominated. Unfortunately, only two of the three days of recording were obtained for analysis, but there is ample footage to show the diversity within his camera work and what is not present.

**Illustration 22: Still Shots From Luke's Project, Shot 31, With Strategic Display**



Shot 1



Shot 2



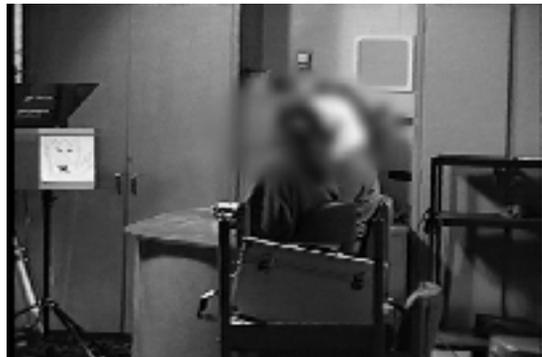
Shot 3



Shot 4



Shot 5



Shot 6

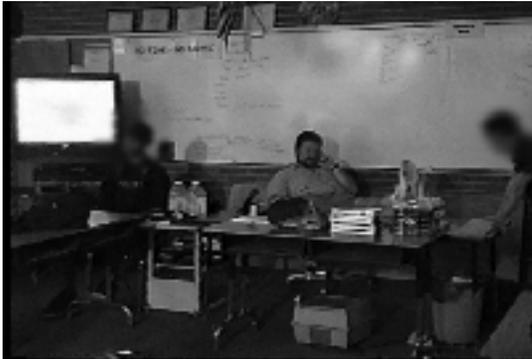
A number of strategic displays of the room exist. Both days of recording end with these displays, and significantly, they were shot during the live news broadcast, encouraging a more distant position. Stills from shot 31, the last shot recorded on the first available day of recording, is shown in Illustration 22. Shot 60, the one taken at the end of the next day, was quite similar, though it was shot from a nearer position. In Shot 31, Luke was standing as far away from people as he could and used short pans, first right (Shot 2) and then left (Shots 3 and 4) before going back right again. In this way, he showed the positions of everyone and everything in the room. He then zoomed in on the anchor desk (Shot 5), strategically marking it as significant. The anchor desk is already structurally marked by being raised up on a platform, but the zoom conveys this significance with far more clarity than was apparent from Luke's position. There is then movement between the anchor desk and the cameras, but the abruptness of the movements suggest that Luke was attempting to show the B-roll (a prerecorded tape) that was being shown. Another small zoom (Shot 6) and more back and forth panning demonstrate his indecision, which is resolved by stopping the camera just after they returned to the live feed.

The shot is strategic—it offers a power in seeing all—but distance is also communicated. First, poor lighting limits what can be seen and can be attributed more to lack of skill than Luke's relationship with events. Luke's position, however, prevents clarity in what can be seen. The anchors' faces cannot be seen,

and more importantly, the activities of the production crew are not visible. Anonymity and obscurity are forced on events. The sound, in particular, contributes to a feeling of being faraway from the action because very little can be heard. Additionally, the table and cart with a box on top that lie between Luke and the anchor desk emphasize distance and limit access, visual and otherwise, thus reducing the power of the display but reinforcing a distance that is throughout his work.

Luke's camera work, as in the Urban project, shows evidence of decreasing distance over time: People are shown in increasingly closer shots when the height of the faces' images from sequential clusters are averaged, but the pattern is less noticeable because of the increased variety in shots. What is more apparent is that his actual and symbolic distance from people is contextually bound and particularly far when the teacher is shown. Illustration 23 show stills from all the shots in which the teacher was the central focus. In general, close-up shots are rare and distances are great, but the teacher is consistently shown from larger distances. There is a strategic quality to these displays, but the power is deemphasized while the distance is salient. Luke, for instance, is closest to the teacher when he recorded him from behind. Moreover, there are always obstacles (student desks and the teacher desk) between Luke and the teacher when he is shown from the front. These obstacles make it very difficult to get near the teacher; they are instances of how a standard arrangement of desks prevent

**Illustration 23: Shots of the Teacher, which are routinely taken from far away**



Still 1: From Shot 3



Still 2: From Shot 17



Still 3: From Shot 33



Still 4: From Shot 38



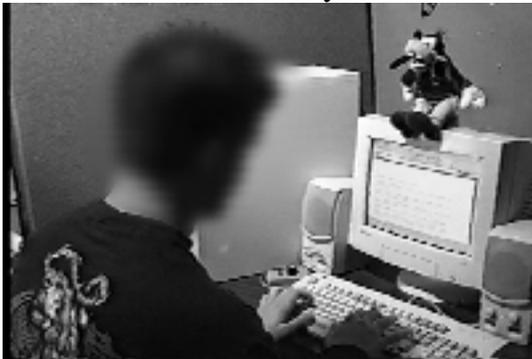
Still 5: From Shot 44

closeness and assert power in the classroom. Nevertheless, Luke does not seek out opportunities to record from a position nearer to the teacher. There are some height differences when the teacher is sitting that could indicate a more powerful position for Luke, but these are mediated by the structural separations and the

placement of both Luke and the teacher. Thus Luke always demonstrates respect toward the teacher—a respect that increases the distance between them.

Students are also shown with respect and distance, though as would be expected, a more equal relationship is communicated. Students are frequently, though not always, recorded in medium shots from a closer position. The three shots that include close-ups, however, most clearly demonstrate a difficulty Luke has. Shot 7 (Illustration 24, Still 1) is recorded from behind—the same technique used to record the teacher from a closer position. There is clearly less intimacy when facing someone’s back. Luke interviews this student from this odd position, asking him to explain who he is and what he does for the show, and the student

**Illustration 24: The Only Shots From Project 5 That Contain Close-ups**



Still 1: From Shot 7



Still 2: From Shot 34 before moving closer



Still 3: From Shot 34 after moving closer



Still 4: From Shot 40

does not turn to look at the camera when answering. In shot 34 (Still 2), Luke was interviewing a student when the teacher (from off camera) told him to move “closer and go wide.” Luke followed the instructions (Still 3), but he never stood as near again. In Shot 40 (Still 4), the interviewee actually walked toward the camera, and after a polite moment, Luke stepped backwards. Luke only chose to stand close to his subject when the subject was female, she was not facing him directly, there was a desk between them, and he was given explicit instructions. Luke’s resistance to being close in video work reflects the observed discrepancy in how he talked about other students and how they spoke about him: He asserted a closeness orally that was inconsistent with what students said to and about him.

With students more generally, desks continued to structure relations. The anchor desk—a center of activity and a frequent site of recording—particularly demonstrated power. The position of “news anchor” was an important one and seemed to guarantee a more central role in other classroom activities. Luke frequently recorded people while they sat behind it, thus reducing the potential power that might have been derived from standing while his subjects sat. Of course, this was in part due to his classmates positioning when they gathered around the desk. The influence of the anchor desk, however, was not always ignored: Luke usually recorded from one side or slightly to the front, but for two interviews (Shots 25 and 46), he positioned himself differently. See Illustration 25 for shots of the same students—the anchors—from different positions. Shots with

the desk between Luke and his subjects—as in the two shown—were typically filled with teasing and jokes, and most importantly they were not directed toward Luke (though frequently for his benefit). By contrast, the interviews without desks in the middle were approached with all appearances of sincerity.

**Illustration 25: The Difference in the Position of the Anchor Desk**



Still 1: From Shot 22



Still 2: From Shot 25



Still 3: From Shot 47



Still 4: From Shot 46

Luke strategically displayed the room's organization and marked the powerful places. He was nearly always positioned in undefined and therefore weaker places. And he avoided having a direct effect on activities. He conducted many interviews, which put him in a position of relative power, but as with the Urban High group, he asserted this power as little as possible. In shot 25, the

student asked, “Why I like Tech?” and Luke answered, “Sure!” rather than formulating a question of his own. This relationship was even more clear in shot 36 (see Illustration 26) when he interviewed the producers of the show. The male student asked, “Are you going to ask us or . . .” Luke answered, “Just start talking.” The female student said, “Okay, [Luke], you’re recording now. Do you want to interview us?” The male producer began, “I . . . I . . . Go ahead and say who you are.” And in this way, they said what they imagined they should, and Luke did what he could to give all the power to them.



**Illustration 26: The Interview From Shot 36 in which the interviewees decided on the topics**

There were, on the other hand, few events with subjective camera movement, despite Luke describing some of his camera work as being like “Blair Witch,” and none that defined or redefined his subject. He also rarely expressed solidarity or lack thereof with anyone, beyond the go ahead to speak or do whatever people wanted (expressing a great deal of solidarity). Rare moments arose, however, when he *participated* in the recording. Illustration 27 shows stills

**Illustration 27: Stills From Shot 2, Showing Luke's Most Subjective Camera Work**



Still 1: The Opening Frame



Still 2: Luke is bumped or trips as he walks forward.



Still 3: Luke continues toward control room.



Still 4: Luke steps up to the door.



Still 5: The door is closed.



Still 6: Luke continues recording through the window.

from a shot in which he walked toward two wrestling students and spoke, “Of course you know who’s going to win. It’s not a secret. [The door is shut by an onlooker (Still 5).] And the door has been shut in my face. Brutality. It’s on tape.”

It was with one student (the larger of the two wrestlers in Illustration 27), whose aggressive attempts to respond to and perform for the camera could not be ignored, that led to Luke's only moment of (relative) aggression. While Luke was trying to interview another student, the other student put his face directly in the camera and said "Hello." Luke quickly answered, "Stop it," and stopped the camera, taking up the interview again only when the disruptive student was out of the way. But at another time, as shown in Illustration 28, Luke allowed this same student to present a more personal statement for the camera. He began, "You know there a lot of white people in this classroom. Me and this bro over here are the only Mexicans. . . ." and eventually discussed music. This was the only student whom Luke allowed to speak to the camera when it was not an interview.



**Illustration 28: A student offers a comment about being non-white and describes his Mexican music.**

Thus with this student, Luke demonstrated more conflict but gave him and only him an opportunity to "perform." The differences can be related to context: This student presented challenges and desires that the other students did not. When not confronted, Luke demonstrated solidarity and distance in his relations.

He also demonstrated a distinct lack of power: the only strategic camera uses were symbolic ones. Despite the power of the camera, Luke went out of his way to avoid asserting his own purposes onto events, whether strategically or tactically, and he maintained an extremely even quality in his uses of the camera. Even the strategic displays of the room seemed to be a response to the context in that the live broadcast of the show limited his movement in the room.

The ways in which Luke related to people in his classes (beginning and advanced) and the ways in which he talked about his relationships were inconsistent. Similarly, his view of himself as a “screenwriter” and his generally peripheral and inexpert activity in the courses were inconsistent. Despite oral assertions of closeness and experience (as a writer), Luke had a very loose affiliation with the program and its members. His distance more than any direct expressions of difference demonstrated his status. And without some degree of intimacy to make a meaningful solidarity, Luke more easily pursued ideals in his work that were foreign to the program but was unable to use what was strong, thus preventing development in new directions.

### **Social Relations At Boarding High With Wicket and Jerome**

The project by Wicket and Jerome is dramatically different from the other two projects because of the greater freedom they had during production *and* because of the very different relations they had with their school. The students

who volunteered at the other schools tended to have positive relationships with school simply because such students were more likely to volunteer and to create some video for analysis. At Boarding High, however, there seemed to be a great ambivalence among all the students—not surprising given the school’s history and the statement of the art teacher about students only being sent to the school after being expelled from other schools. During observations, Wicket and Jerome—like the rest of the students—displayed reserve and a degree of passivity when called upon by adults for reaction. I looked toward the video with a hope of understanding and was delighted to find that I came to know these students—or at least whom they were for a very small portion of their lives—through their video project. When I interviewed them, I learned more, particularly in terms of the overall difference in how they narrated their video. The video reveals aspects of their relations that would not have been available for observation. A duality is revealed that was not present in the other two focal projects and did not appear in any of the projects at the other two schools; the duality was present in other projects at Boarding High but not with such clarity.

The two worlds of Wicket and Jerome’s school experience—at their simplest—were one with adults and one without. But of course this distinction is an oversimplification; there were adults with whom a blurring of boundaries was visible. In general, the world with adults is one in which the students are respectful and reserved, and the world without is where students assert both

**Illustration 29: Still Shots From Jerome's Shot 13 From Day 1 that demonstrate a shift between the worlds without and with authorities**



Still 1



Still 2



Still 3



Still 4

power and closeness. This difference is remarkably consistent with Bernstein's "positional families" in which adults maintain their authority and "children [are] socialized through unsupervised age peers or mates" (1971, p. 160). The analysis of four adjacent shots demonstrate the difference. Due to questionable details, the analysis is speculative but supported by other parts of the project. The first of the three shots was described as an example of recording through a window and as *video graffiti* in which the students mocked the authority of the men, referred elsewhere as "security." Illustration 29 shows a still from the beginning of the second shot, in which Jerome recorded the staff through the glass as he moved toward the door, and three stills as he begins to speak with them. Jerome's quality

of speaking changed dramatically as he moved from one still to the next (a quality that can be heard in the video).

In the first shot, Jerome and Wicket joke exuberantly as they walk. Jerome tactically shows his own movement while overcoming the boundary of the glass. This expressiveness begins to flatten, however, as soon as he confronts the staff in the second shot. Jerome says with little change in his voice, "What's up, Chief." The staff member, who stands in the center of the first three stills answers, "How's it going?" Jerome suddenly sounds subdued when he answers, "Alright." He then tilts the camera down (movement from Still 2 to Still 3), corresponding with the shift in activity. Jerome then arcs the camera up and to the left and zooms in before he says, "Just a video." He recovers some by refocusing on the adult who is not looking at him, but he abruptly stops recording when the first adult begins to ask another question. The activity took a serious turn, and this was not what Jerome wanted to record. He stopped the camera. In the following brief shot seen in Illustration 30, Jerome silently records the silhouettes of three people and a dog as they walk away from him in the hall. The doors and hallway strategically frame the camera frame while the silence and increasing distance with the subject show a degree of isolation. The shift from buoyant mockery to a lonely scene of faceless people moving off in another direction demonstrates a shift from tactical solidarity with one another to a symbolically strategic distance. Power is not directly asserted in these activities.



**Illustration 30: Still From Jerome's Day 1, Shot 14 showing increasing distance and a use of the structure**

In Jerome's next shot, Shot 15 (Illustration 31), he enters a classroom, somewhat at the encouragement of Wicket—the only one with whom he continues to show solidarity. There are no adults present, and Jerome quickly recovers his humor but shifts his use of strategies to actions that have an effect on real time activities. Wicket immediately begins teasing the students in the room, saying, "Picture the alien!" Jerome begins with a strategic wide angle shot before zooming in (a visual marking of the subject) and uttering something about "class monkey" (an oral definition). Jerome calls to the students (Still 2), "Hey, I'm recording! This is for school!" in response to a student's extended middle finger, having a direct effect on the activity and defining the events. At the same time, he is seeking some cooperation from the students. Jerome uses the camera, height, and his greater freedom of movement to shape the situation both in real time and for the audience. He turns the camera (Still 3) to a boy and girl who sit near each

other, tactically catching the girl tickling the boy, and turns it to his advantage, teasing them more and threatening to expose this behavior to their respective girl- and boy-friends. The power Jerome gains in this moment has both strategic and tactical qualities, but there is none of the respect he ordinarily showed adults.

**Illustration 31: Stills From Jerome's Shot 15 in which Jerome acts strategically by defining the event, limiting people's participation, and teasing students**



Shot 1



Still 2



Still 3



Still 4

The camera was frequently used to tease other students—by these students and students at other schools. The major difference was that at Boarding High, the students recorded (and did not record over) these exchanges. The dynamics of such teasing was similar throughout Wicket and Jerome's work and were quite similar to some in the pilot data, except that in this project most events containing

such power accentuating teasing were followed by expressions of solidarity with the same students. The degree to which such shots reflect an assertion of power is ambiguous, but the camera—and position it enables—lends extra power to its operator (or in this case to the two of them because they both adopt that power whether they were holding the camera or not) to such an extent that the retorts seem relatively feeble. Such teasing could slide quite easily into bullying, but these students show restraint and usually seek out a moment to express solidarity without assertions of power.

**Illustration 32: Stills of Event From Wicket's Shot 6 of Day 1 in which sudden shifts demonstrate changing positions and relative intimacy**



Still 1: The teacher motions for students.



Still 2: The teacher leads them away.



Still 3: The teacher performs for students.



Still 4: The teacher leaves.

A difference with this project, which is perhaps consistent with the discovery that the camera can be used to increase one's power because it was also true of some pilot data, is that these students seemed to have little difficulty in doing close-ups of the people they recorded. Both students used the zoom feature more easily than students at the other schools and more frequently recorded while standing quite near people. Long shots also were more prevalent, thus the range was greater. At this point the evidence is inconclusive, but this difference is attributed to the difference in relationships: Wicket and Jerome showed conflict and intimacy with students routinely, but both maintained greater symbolic and actual distance and less—as well as less direct—conflict with authority figures. Close-ups of staff existed, but there were none of the extreme close-ups that existed of fellow students.

One teacher, seen in Illustration 32, clearly had a different relationship with the students and the dialogic nature of relations was particularly evident during this event. It began with the teacher coming apparently to move students out of the hallway (see Still 1 and 2), but it quickly shifted as Jerome tells him what they have already recorded. The music teacher, shifting his position, then performs for them (Still 3) and left them alone (Still 4). Two dips of the camera suggest an awareness of the potential conflict that is not apparent in Wicket or Jerome's oral interaction, but they respond first as a silent audience taking a close-up shot and then with appreciative laughter and camera movements to

follow his departure. As they leave, Wicket says, “That was a one time thing, and I recorded it.” The general response of the students (there are others there) is supported by the close-ups and actual nearness to indicate that this teacher is well liked and relatively intimate with students. The changing dynamics of this relationship are reflected in the use of close-ups and medium shots and the two downward tilts.

There was much more, however, to Wicket and Jerome’s work than the teasing of fellow students and apparent respect of authority figures. They each had moments of quiet recording, which demonstrated a more serious interest, and they interacted with the physical environment in a way that, while being quite unlike the recording activity at the other schools, revealed nuances of their relations with school and beyond. In one shot (previously discussed and shown in Illustration 14), a strategic and distant display of the neighborhood and honors dorm reflected a sense of power and humility and an expressed difference with dominant ideologies as the role of honors students is raised. Wicket and Jerome were far from silent in this shot, but as they turned from the dorms to a church, their jokes gave way to a more serious commentary about the acts of the Church in “England times” by Wicket (Illustration 33, Stills 1 and 2), which he took up again during his narration. Another shot (Still 3) used petals on the ground as a backdrop for a poem, which also suggested a more serious concern. Several shots demonstrated Wicket and Jerome’s appreciation of talents and objects with their

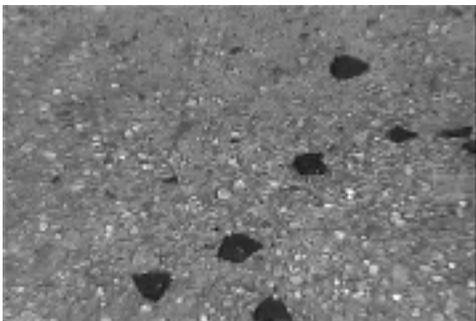
**Illustration 33: Stills From Various Shots That Were Recorded With A Serious Tone**



Still 1: From Jerome's Day 1, Shot 16



Still 2: From Jerome's Day 1, Shot 16



Still 3: From Wicket's Day 1, Shot 7



Still 4: From Wicket's Day 1, Shot 6



Still 5: From Jerome's Day 1, Shot 10



Still 6: From Jerome's Day 1, Shot 11



Still 7: From Wicket's Day 2, Shot 2



Still 8: From Wicket's Day 2, Shot 4

silence and avoidance of distraction (Stills 4 through 8). These shots—particularly the ones with little commentary—clearly demonstrate that close-ups, even extreme close-ups, are not necessarily a mockery of or lack of respect toward the object or person being shown. For example, the silence shown for the guitar player in Still 4 and protest when he stopped playing indicate that, in addition to playing with perspectives, some of these close-ups mean the camera operator is fully absorbed (or wanting to be) in the activity. Even in Still 8, in which the camera has been rotated to further play with perspectives, Wicket demonstrates an appreciation for the student-made murals throughout the buildings; this shot by itself is not conclusive, but when compared to the many shots of murals, their appreciation becomes evident. These shots collectively suggest that mockery frequently borders on more serious interests and critiques, but whether close-ups of objects have an equivalent meaning as close-ups of people currently remains speculative.

The shots used in the edited piece show a consistent concern with different aspects of authority, which is sprinkled throughout their work. Stills from each of the shots that were used are shown in Illustration 34. Additional stills from the “Church” shot and the “Helicopter” shot are shown in the previous illustration. There were only four shots of the camera zooming in and out or shakily displaying the objects with the camera zoomed in. Parts of the “Jesus” shot were shown five times at the beginning and three times at the end. The interpretation is

Illustration 34: Stills from each of the 4 shots in the edited project, showing a concern with authority



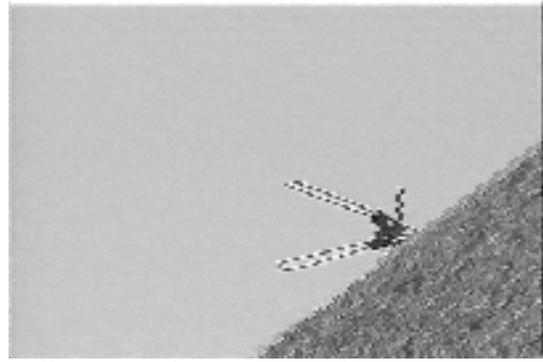
Still 1: From the "Jesus" shot



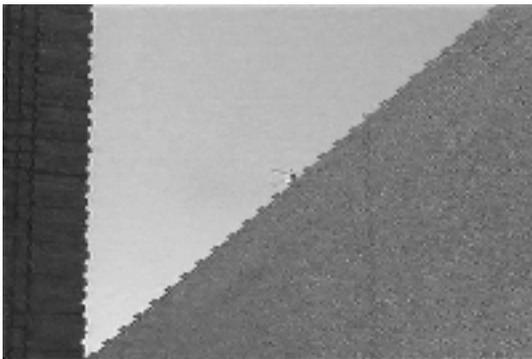
Still 2: From the "Jesus" shot



Still 3: From the "Church" shot



Still 4: From the "Antenna" shot



Still 5: From the "Antenna" shot



Still 6: From the "Helicopter" shot

heavily influenced by the original sound, which was not included in the edit, and the narration. Unfortunately, it is not known what song was intended as the soundtrack. When recording the "Jesus" shot, Wicket said ominously, "Jesus is watching you!" and the discussion around the antenna was about nobody

knowing what it was for with the suggestion that it must be for something secretive. The Church was described as persecuting people, and Wicket discussed not being Christian during his narration. The only comment made about the helicopter was “Where did it go?” as Wicket looked for it to emerge from behind the tree. This search for helicopter, as can be seen in Still 6, was included in the edited project. Surveillance, persecution, and imposition of a foreign authority are thus suggested.

The last comment on how central a role authority had in their relations with school—and a testimony to ways in which it interferes with education—is given to Wicket. At the beginning of their camera work on the second day, Wicket happened upon an intriguing scene, which he recorded while imitating a news reporter. Illustration 35 shows stills of some of the events, and the following describes what happened:

Wicket yells, “him,” as the camera starts. A student is seen running through the central quad. He yells, “He's on the run!” The student gestures with his middle finger. Wicket yells, “He's running! Who are you running from?” The student runs behind the wall that shades the art classroom. He bends over to catch his breath and looks over his shoulder. The student answers, “Security.” Wicket repeats, “He's running from security.” The runner whispers, “Fuck you,” and extends his middle finger again. The camera turns toward

**Illustration 35: Stills From Wicket's Day 2, Shot 1 of a student running from security**



Still 1



Still 2



Still 3



Still 4



Still 5



Still 6

the quad and the area beyond it. Wicket says, “Oh, man. Oh, there’s the security!” He looks for them with the camera until they are found. Two men walk beneath the trees on the other side of the quad. Jerome asks, “Where they at?” Wicket answers, “They’re over there.” He shows the security. Wicket almost sings, “Security.”

Wicket says, “Osh. Here they come. They're looking this way.” The student is looked for and then shown again. Wicket says, “Here's a runaway slave against those bozos.” The camera searches for the two men again. Wicket continues, “...right there. This is live!” The student is shown again. Wicket continues, “This guy just ran from security, and he's from Choice Dorm [said, Choy Store, it seems; this is a dorm where students are placed as punishment, but another clip provides evidence that there is some meaning to the way Wicket says it].” Jerome asks [barely audible], “Are you recording?” Wicket answers while laughing, “Yeah.” The camera stops.

This shot is simply about a boy playing with a camera, who happened to come upon another boy fleeing from punishment, but in his role as witness—which would usually have gone unnoticed and been invisible—he *uses* this moment to engage with a conflict that clearly permeates his school life. He zooms in and out on and pans back and forth between the participants of the drama, using both the strategic technique of having a celestial-like view and the tactical technique of distorting perspectives. Who does he identify more with at this moment? These are the same security from the shots discussed at the beginning of this section. They like and respect these men, though not without reservations. The runaway is, however, a student like themselves. He is not happy with Wicket, perhaps fearing that they will reveal his location, but Wicket does not show any

concern for this, laughing at the standard gestures. He is surprisingly comfortable being a witness but transforms what would have been a passive role into an active one by assuming the tone of a news reporter. When placed in the context of half the student-body recently being sent home, the routine ambivalence expressed in shifting seamlessly from strategies to tactics—in a way not seen in the other projects—and the high degree of playful conflict also shifting quickly into expressions of solidarity is unsurprising. The video displays a student-school relationship of ambivalent engagement. These students' relative success in creating a meaningful project is likely related to this engagement and perhaps to the openness of the ambivalence.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions?

The students' story, as much as it is about the production of a video and the development of a learning process, also turns out to be about a web of relationships; those that formed between learner and learner, learner and teacher, learner and documentarian, learner and subject matter, and learner and video technology. (Goodman, 2003, p. 66)

In considering the meaning of *space* as a representation of social relations in learning and development, this dissertation has explored four major themes: (1) variations in high school video production programs, (2) the participation of the material in classroom activities, (3) the complexity of development within these contexts, and (4) the use of a novel methodology in defining social relations. These themes are held together in the effort to elaborate upon the connections between developmental and social processes, which inherently draws on contexts in diverse ways. The idea of a *student-school relationship* brings together the positions of individual students and the institution of school as it is manifest in particular contexts over a period of time, but its definition in any particular case can only be partial because it is constantly in motion. Therefore, this concluding

chapter will revisit the themes that make particular student-school relationships meaningful for other contexts and future research.

### **The Meaning Of Video Production**

Despite the abundance of interest in video production for secondary schools, little research has examined existing programs. This study contributes to an understanding of video production as a high school course. As such, it can contribute to the design and redesign of programs. This, however, has not been an objective, and a comprehensive evaluation of the programs is not presented. Nevertheless, in an effort to summarize, some evaluation is warranted. An important conclusion to bear in mind is that an evaluation of programs or student work should examine the broader contexts to establish parameters that are particular to that program and to that student (or group of students). Evaluations that attempt to be context-free will fail to appreciate the successes and failures that student projects represent for both individuals and the programs.

Suburban High, for example, had the strongest program in terms of the quality and quantity of products: It resulted in approximately 50 videos among beginning students and more than 100 broadcasts of the student news program. Projects tended to be technically superior to the videos from the other schools and were frequently better in numerous other qualities. Technical proficiency was the

priority, which was reflected in most projects. The program's weaknesses were visible in the unevenness across projects and in the unevenness in participation. The evidence suggests that not all students adopted a focus on technical proficiency and that students of color were less likely to identify with the "Tech" community. As a vocational program, it was successful in preparing students for the kind of jobs that might be available to them, but there was little room for creativity, self-expression, or broader involvement in projects.

The program at Urban High, on the other hand, was intended to inspire students while promoting literacy, being modeled after successful programs. Its design was the opposite of Suburban High's design: It sought to engage students in projects and to facilitate the acquisition of skills only as needed. This strategy is one that may have enhanced the Suburban High program, encouraging a critique of its more traditional model. In its application at Urban High, however, it failed in numerous ways but most visibly in its stress on "planning" activities that required more standard academic work, which students both rejected and frequently lacked the skills for. The sheer lack of activity in all observed courses was clearly a pattern for students but may have been altered if teachers had sought more engagement with students and less academic beginnings. Still, videos were produced, reflecting personal victories for both students and teachers.

The program at Boarding High had the least demanding objective: The leading activity was simply to introduce digital art by having students create their

own projects. Nevertheless, many of the interns expressed a sense of failure because of the difficulty in promoting student interest. They were hampered by a lack of time, occasionally by a lack of equipment, and by confusion over their roles. Their lack of preparation for working with adolescents who had poor relationships with school and who were Native American may have contributed. Boarding High students were similarly confused about what was expected because program goals and “digital art” were novel to them. But when on their own, these students showed creativity and assertiveness that never arose in the classroom, and they explored what it is to “do video” in ways not seen in the other programs.

The ways in which Boarding High students used their greater freedom demonstrates difference but does not clarify which course activities will best promote development. The best activities for a particular program would depend primarily on the program’s orientation, but the question of what students *do* with different assignments should also be considered. The freedom students at Boarding High experienced during production resulted in more play and more creativity. They tended to explore their schools through the lens of a camera in much the same way that students did in the pilot study. The potential of a camera to alter social relations was manifest most often in this program. By contrast, the greater constraints on production activity that was imposed by standard assignments resulted in few changes in social relations. These constraints, however, were creatively and enthusiastically fulfilled *when* students introduced

satire. In these cases, the genre constraints became a challenge to students to make their projects fun and personal anyway, but it was a challenge to which only some students responded.

In sum, students found many meanings—many purposes—in their video productions, and these meanings were particular to contexts and particular to students. Assignments like commercials provoke a predictable range of projects: from uncreative imitations of standard television commercials to creative satires, with many in between. The greater freedom in projects at Boarding High and in Suburban High’s final project led many students to try something ambitious, sometimes too ambitious but always with interesting results. What made an assignment come to “life” for students or not—to cohere into a finished project or fall apart at the edges—had everything to do with other aspects of the context, which was always influenced by the student-school relationship.

Vocational programs serve a clear and needed function, but as is discussed in the following sections, video has a potential to do more. It can promote development in youth—a development that is not likely to become visible on standardized tests but that will show in a student’s ability to communicate and reflect. Many programs with this type of goal are relegated to the after-school hours. The obstacles to conducting courses that are not studio-based in traditional schools are frequently too numerous. After-school programs are important and

meaningful, but in these, the potential for making school itself more meaningful to students is lost.

### **Evaluation Of A Methodology**

Student-made video projects create new affordances for research, serving two purposes: to investigate development within the context of high school video production and to advance a way to reveal microgenetic processes. The first of these purposes used video projects in the same way numerous other artifacts have been used. The videos were concrete evidence of what students did, perhaps of what they were capable of doing under the circumstances of production. The projects were placed within the context of their creation, based on observations and relevant other materials, to specify students' activity and the ways in which the contexts constrained and promoted different aspects of production. The quality of projects was found to be so interwoven with the general conduct of the classes that the search for development could not meaningfully be undertaken without constant reference to the context. The analysis revealed that the elements studied as parts of a quality video vied for attention, and that the elements students focused on varied with project meanings. Thus the effort to reveal development in the diverse and few projects that were acquired was to some degree an effort to understand the process of video production as it varied

between programs. The differences in student participation and the agency they asserted were the greatest areas of change and the strongest indications of development. A more in depth analysis of development in video communication would require more works by the same students, and future research needs to be brought into relation with the extensive research in literacy development.

The more novel use of informant-made videos is to investigate social relations. Student-made video projects are found to yield information about student-school relations that tends to be consistent with observations but far more detailed. These details are essential to understanding the microgenesis of the student-school relationship, but video projects obtained for analysis yielded few opportunities for considering this level of development. The specific orientations of two of the programs frequently limited the value of videos for this analysis, but when students engaged in a production process involving exploration, the dynamics of social relations, their dependence on context, and some suggestions of microgenetic changes were visible.

Integrating the different parts of analysis and finding meaningful ways of maintaining the detail while pursuing evidence of systematic changes must continue. A number of steps are recommended: First, the video programs to be included should promote numerous projects by their participants, and ideally the projects would all be recorded within the school and have the emphasis placed on the recording phase rather than the planning phase. Additionally, greater freedom

in genre selection may yield projects in which students more fully develop their own agendas and the ways of using video cameras to alter their position in the school, thus demonstrating microgenetic processes more fully. And an essential first step in furthering the analysis would be to include more people, including if possible the videographers, in all stages of research so that more interpretations can be explored and a consensus sought. A great deal more analysis can be undertaken of the video projects obtained for this study, but other eyes and ears will reveal meaningful moments that would otherwise be missed and will further test the validity of the approaches thus far taken. Moreover, the richness of the data prevented the pursuit of every significant moment. Additional videos and a return to these will further the task of establishing patterns and remarkable moments, which in turn will facilitate movement from disconnected moments toward a framework for threading them together into more meaningful stories of contextualized development.

The possibility of using student-made videos to access a much wider range and number of schools exists because video production has become so widespread, but such efforts would be advised to proceed cautiously. To investigate development, some background information about assignments, course ideology, and the students would be essential. For further exploration of social relations, the information yielded about particular schools and students would be very limited without a thorough understanding of the contexts of

production. In this study, the analysis of many parts of video work would have been served by being able to go back to the students who produced it or to the places in which they were recorded to check details that were not available (such as specific locations and the arrangement of classrooms in relation to one another). If anything, the best way to further this methodology would include more involvement with the schools and students of the study—to know the buildings and grounds and to ask students in greater detail about their intentions and reflections. Ideally future research could truly collaborate with teachers to shape the program to serve both research and student needs. On the other hand, a survey of video work from many schools would facilitate the discovery of common patterns and changes over time. Though only a beginning at attaining a new, more detailed yet dynamic way of studying social phenomena, the analysis that has been completed thus far demonstrates the semiotic richness of informant-made videos, and because the “data” can be presented in its raw form to wide audiences, there is the potential for engaging many people in theory building.

### **The Affordances Of Contexts As Active Participants**

Some constraints can become structurally fixed entities; they may become encoded in some fixed form in the environment . . . . Yet the function of such materialized constraints is maintained by

dynamic semiotic processes, and once the latter undergo the breaking of their status quo in the psychological systems of persons and the social discourses of social institutions, the materially fixed constraints can be broken and turned into symbolic tokens for tourists or collectors. (Valisner, 1997, p. 181-182)

Schools contain the perspectives of all participants—the “ideological complexes” (Hodge and Kress, 1988) of the institution—and the many ways these are embodied, embraced, rejected, hidden, and adapted in the *places* where educational activities occur. The programs that were studied had very different ideological complexes and very different physical structures and resources. Their comparison supports a need for educators to attend to the different aspects of their material environments, but it is not because environments determine school activities or what students take from them. Rather, it is that the tools students have access to, the manner in which access is regulated, the images arranged for students to see, the furniture they occupy, and the walls and doors that limit their movement all participate in what is akin to a dialog with students and teachers—a dialog that typically is unremarked upon and outside people’s awareness. The structure of such dialogs define “the *relationships* between [educational] contents” (“classification”) and “the specific pedagogical relationship of teacher and taught” (“frame”) (Bernstein, 1971, p. 205). Many specific dialogs, at different levels and

from different data, have been described throughout this dissertation, but bringing them together to build an understanding of the processes behind them and an account of common concerns that can easily be applied to reform efforts is more difficult.

The material environment (1) constrains the actions of teachers and students, (2) affords particular activities that could not occur without pertinent objects or arrangements, (3) promotes some actions and identities over others, (4) embodies symbolic meanings that can potentially influence student-school relations, and (5) contains semiotically rich *places* that can be altered and borrowed. The environment thus *participates* in student-school relationships. Many activities are impossible in classrooms that lack the necessary resources, and authorities further constrain actions by imposing particular meanings. Whether intended or not, whether broadly understood or perceived by no one, the material environment contains messages and silences others. The environment's power arises in the way it structures activity—limiting and directing its movement—and simultaneously in the way it reflects actions, identities, agendas, in short, the ideologies of a wide range of people.

The buildings and grounds of a school immediately reflect the ideologies—the priorities and orientations—of those who design, build, and maintain them, but finding concrete ways in which these broad aspects of school contexts participate in student activity is difficult. They set a tone that was often consistent

with observed activity. Students were forced to adapt to what was available or to leave the campus when they were afforded this opportunity, frequently leading to the existence of an activity in one school and its complete absence in the other schools. Murals presented such an affordance: They and other postings on the wall were engaged by students at Boarding High to define identities and interests. The murals in this way promoted a sense of solidarity with the school. The absence of meaningful displays at the other two schools, however, were reflected only in their absence in student videos and a greater inattention to environments. As already noted, assignments and program ideologies at Urban and Suburban Highs discouraged a visual exploration of the environment, but the schools offered very little for them to explore and clearly nothing in which student identity was reflected. Thus the uses of *spaces* within schools as neutral contexts and the choice by many students to record away from school supports the assertion that they did not see themselves or their interests reflected in their schools, but the evidence is inconclusive. More importantly, the moments when students did engage with the material world serve as dramatic examples of the fluidity of meaning and salience of objects in school environments.

The processes connecting activities and the environment were more clearly visible in the classrooms: The classrooms at Suburban and Boarding Highs thoroughly reflected the programs and classroom activities. Only at Urban High were the programs invisible; the rooms maintained an institutional bareness,

either as an out of date culinary classroom with computers stashed in the closet or as a large warehouse stuffed with a wide array of objects. Rivlin and Wolfe (1985, p. 194) noted that the classrooms they studied were clearly under the control of teachers and that students perceived the room as belonging to their teachers, but in these classrooms that seemed to belong to nobody, the authority of teachers was more openly contested and ignored. The existence of the programs was the least visible. Student identities were also absent. Paired with the fact that it was only in this school that the program did not originate with the instructors, a lack of “ownership” was demonstrated by teachers in relation to both their classrooms and their activities. Did the condition of classrooms participate in making the adoption of program ideologies more difficult? The effort to shape the “Studio” for the program was half done and forgotten, and though it afforded their needs, it remained a warehouse. The evidence of how this atmosphere impacted student activity is, however, spotty, but at the least, the environments symbolically embodied a disconnect between the program and the school and perhaps contributed to the disconnect between teachers and students.

The reaction of students to specific items in their environments is rarely visible under normal circumstances. As consumers of education, the ways students have of reflecting particular meanings are limited. The art classroom at Boarding High, far more than most classrooms and more than many art classrooms I have observed, displayed student activity, but this too was controlled by the teacher: by

her assignments and her choices as to what projects to display and where. The introduction of video cameras allows audiences to observe how students consume their environments. It makes consumption visible. Students were able to find opportunities via cameras for asserting their own meanings onto objects and places. At its extreme, such actions are referred to as *video graffiti*. Thus audiences are led to potentially new ways of seeing familiar objects and places, and students have a more substantial way of creating meaning.

Students' uses and definitions of places confirm many observations and make visible the process of negotiation that exists. In general, students recorded in what had conceptually been considered student-owned places or the spaces between places, such as doorways and the borders of room areas, that belonged to nobody and asserted no agendas. Their uses of these areas reflects the lack of authority students had and the transitory nature of the solidarity students experience with schools. The moments of recording in classrooms or more defined places were few and far between, occurring usually when students "played" with the camera rather than working on a project.

Particular places, however, were defined by students during exploration and in narrations. Student narrations of videotapes have thus far been underutilized, but they offer important additions to interpreting campus meanings from student perspectives. The labeling and relabeling of places occurred in original recordings and later narrations, and students expressed their sense of

belonging and lack of belonging by where they positioned themselves in relations to people, places, and objects. For instance, the interest and comfort Wicket and Jerome expressed in the music department distinguished it as a place where students had a greater sense of belonging. The placement and movement of camera and interviewer in the only non-video classroom where multiple interviews were recorded (Urban High's "Sex Talk," Project 8) showed a reluctance—even when given permission—to assume the teacher's position, and the teacher's reluctance to yield her power was equally indicated by her position at the head of the class. Remarkably, students at all the schools failed to rearrange classrooms for their video projects except when using the "sets" in the Urban High studio or doing the "news" as Suburban High. Thus, the only times students altered a place was when the teacher explicitly promoted such actions.

Such examples affirm the meanings of places as well as the interest students have or lack there of in changing their meanings. Moreover, the utility of using the placement of the camera operator in defining relations verifies the significance of material relations, including open spaces and human bodies. For example, the fact that height—the use of upward and downward tilts of the camera—was found nearly always to correspond to circumstances rather than choices reflects both the students' lack of experience with cameras and their lack of awareness of the potential effects of such positioning. With a larger sample of

videos, including some by more experienced students, this and other issues that confound camera experience and potential meanings could be further explored.

The greatest evidence of how material environments *participate* in activities arises in how the use of a video camera changes student activity. First, the camera has an inherent power that students can use to ask questions or initiate dialog in places where students are typically denied these rights. Closely related to this is the power to control who is seen and heard, at least in the world the students create on the video. The videographer also gains the ability to determine *how* the subject is seen or heard, creating a certain loss of power for the video's subjects that could be particularly threatening to some teachers. The camera creates a fundamental change in the way students relate to the material environment because it gives students permission to move around the school building and to alter the environment materially or symbolically. Cameras promote engagement with both the material world and other people, forcing students in some sense to initiate relations. Furthermore, the two phases of videography promotes reflection as the initial experience of recording is reengaged in the editing phase. At the school level, video production encourages some integration of educational content (Bernstein, 1971) as the science behind the technology, the art of the presentation, and the substance of what is communicated are potentially addressed. Most importantly, video cameras afford students the opportunity to

become agents in their education as they choose how to use the tools of production.

### Space And Video Production

In every aspect, this dissertation is about the centrality of social relations to education. It uses the “social semiotics” (Hodge and Kress, 1988; Lemke, 1993, 1995) of activities and material environments to define student-school relations as a way to understand student development. The social relations of a school or a course are theorized to be established by the type of *space* afforded students—by the amount of freedom within what is constrained and promoted—and manifest in the choices participants make. *Places* within the schools were shaped materially by tools, furniture, and architecture and metaphorically by orientations, assignments, educational philosophies, and classroom activities. Lefebvre’s (1974) three layers of “spatial” meaning—“the triad of the perceived, the conceived, and the lived” (p. 39)—establish the unity between the concrete and metaphorical because the *places*, which may not be a part of students’ or teachers’ conscious experience, nevertheless structure educational activities.

The differences in the available *spaces* of the three programs were dramatic and across multiple dimensions. The strongest similarity was that each program involved students working in groups to produce video projects. The many

directions this took is an indication of how similar tools and similar activities are influenced by the *space* afforded them. It is in this sense that this research represents a challenge to the current focus on “accountability” that expects very similar results from schools across the United States and expects standardized tests to reveal what students have accomplished. An important area of future research is to effectively demonstrate the impact of places on the accomplishments of students while seeking to explain the processes governing the impact.

The analyses of material environments, development in communication, and their intersection in the analysis of student video work demonstrate that the activity from which videos emerge and in which students have an opportunity to develop are shaped directly and indirectly by a wide range of other activities. Many of these activities, particularly the more distant ones, are embodied in the environment, which then mediate more immediate activities. The connections between people, between activities, and between times are thus maintained. Raising awareness of the role contexts have in education may lead to policies that are more suited to improving education.

The point is that meaning matters, and the messages perceived by students in the contexts of their education may not be what anyone intends. Discovering what they are requires an examination of what students do; asking students is insufficient. The messages tend to be below the level of awareness, and moreover

they are not consistent among students. The histories of individual experiences as well as that of programs and schools create dynamic situations that are impossible to wholly capture, but the nature of student-school relationships is visibly interwoven with student development. The accomplishments of students were sought in this study and many were found that demonstrate an ability by students to exceed their surroundings, yet this study must go further to establish a body of evidence connecting activity to *places* and to advance a theory that will elaborate on the connections.

The challenge to developmental psychologists and educational researchers more generally is to maintain the connections between student performance and the contexts from which these performances arise. The *places* with their diverse meanings need to be brought to the foreground in research, and student *development* must be appreciated for the complex set of interrelated processes that it is. The distinction between learning and development is the key to the inadequacies of standardized tests. Moreover, the additional obstacles that tests pose may further damage student-school relationships. Research agendas that examine contexts and utilize analyses of concrete but contextualized data, such as that advanced in this dissertation, need to be established to enable a new level of dialog—one that will promote more effective student-school relations.

More specifically, the process of finding ways to communicate with video was found to be complicated by competing agendas, both in terms of the list of

qualities students could focus on and in terms of the potential conflict within the ways promoted by programs and those sought by students. For some students, the greatest indication of development was in particular uses of agency, and for others, the obstacle of trying to maintain solidarity interfered with fully defining personal agendas. It is in these cases that a focus on the subtext of power and solidarity gave a deeper meaning to student activity. “To show the ‘knowledge and competence’ students deploy through resistance requires that we shift our focus . . . and, moreover, that we search for meaning within the discoordination (Diamondstone, 2002, p. 3).” In this effort, however, it is also important to look for the hidden struggle when there are no visible tensions and discoordinations—to try to recognize the obstacles that confront the students whose silence and cooperation are all that is visible—because these also can be indications of resistance or indications of a problematic lack of resistance.

The most unexpected issue to emerge in this research concerns the utility of video technology in changing student-school relations. Others (Goodman, 2003; Miller & Borowicz, 2003; Reilly, 1998) have considered the more “academic” values of video production, which are not unrelated, but a revolution in the way students relate in school and to school is possible in video production. It will not happen unless teachers and administrators are oriented toward allowing change in the social structure of schools. The number of high school video programs and the number of orientations that have been observed suggests

that it is like many other “revolutionary” technologies that lose most of their impact in application: “School contexts are powerful mediators and frequently powerful resisters of learning innovations” (Honey & Collins, 2003, p. 91). It is from this perspective that Urban High’s abandonment of the New Media Academy for a more manageable vocational program is understood. Nevertheless,

A shift in the assignment of *who* is to ask questions or pose tasks . . . almost always must occur in a context where some kind of institutional order (e.g., formal schooling) exists and where there are strong interests for maintaining and reproducing this order. Especially when mental processes are first played out on the intermental plane, it can cause major challenges to such an order. [emphasis added] (Wertsch et al., 1993, p. 350)

The greatest challenge to the institution of school posed in student video production is that of giving students (at least for moments) the control over who speaks and the freedom to move.

The study of video production programs allows a deeper consideration of what kinds of *spaces* will best promote development. In this sense, my actions as an instructor and as a parent have been heavily influenced by becoming aware of the power involved in constraining activity and the difference that arises when promoting rather than demanding desired behaviors. The power of promotion to bring about more direct internalization slowly took on more ominous qualities as

the consequences of not “resisting” became visible. The evidence suggests that students who find the *space* to resist without damaging their relationship to school will experience greater personal growth. The potential for concrete and metaphorical *space*—those zones without overt constraints or promotions—to further development compels more investigation.

The consequences of having teachers enter that *space* to reveal multiple options or share in problem solving, which more completely resembles Gutierrez et al.’s (1999) *third spaces*, were not demonstrated in this study because instructors were never observed to relate with students in this way. Its absence was most notable in actual production and in the obstacles students faced to completing their projects. The traditional structure of school, even with such an untraditional subject as video production, poses a formidable obstacle to more equitable relations. The evidence speaks to current strategies for reforming education and affecting other broad changes, but it is particularly in establishing a way to elaborate on microgenetic processes and connecting them with macrogenetic processes that this study contributes to larger agendas.

**Appendix A: Video Assignments by Course**

General Assignment	Planning	Length Limit	Production Time	Participation	Specific Techniques	Flexibility with assignment
<i>Boarding High, Course 1</i>						
practice: To record circle around each other	none	none	a few minutes	self-selected groups of 2	none	group size and instructions not enforced
digital art project, like examples	encouraged	one minute	3 class periods + 1 week of camera use in class	self-selected groups	none	none completed
<i>Boarding High, Course 2</i>						
digital art project, like examples	encouraged	short	4 class periods	self-selected groups	none	
<i>Boarding High, Course 3</i>						
digital art project reflecting culture, like interns' examples	encouraged	short	5 class periods	groups selected by art teacher	music added to sound track	
<i>Suburban High, Beginning Television Production (1 &amp; 2)</i>						
test of hand held motions	practice encouraged	not taped	2 class periods plus time learning about motions	individual	Pan, Tilt, Truck, Dolly, Pedestal, High hold, Low hold, "other" mount	graded on successful application of techniques

General Assignment	Planning	Length Limit	Production Time	Participation	Specific Techniques	Flexibility with assignment
test of camera techniques	practice encouraged	none	2 class periods plus time learning about techniques	individual work in groups	calibrating the lens, great depth of field, shallow depth of field, rack focus, indoor and outdoor white balance	graded on successful application of techniques
test of specific shots	practice encouraged	none	unknown, but within 2 weeks	individual work in groups	long shot, medium shot, extreme long shot, closeup, extreme closeup, bust shot, motion vector, over the shoulder shot, and cross-shot	graded on successful application of techniques
test of specific shots	practice encouraged	none	unknown, but within 2 weeks	individual work in groups	detailed combination of shots and vectors	graded on successful application of techniques
test of lighting uses	none	none	unknown, but within 2 weeks	self-selected groups	5 shots of specific indoor lighting and 5 shots of outdoor lighting	graded on successful use of lights
test of audio techniques	none	none	one week	self-selected groups	using audio equipment for interviews	grade on successful use of sound equipment

General Assignment	Planning	Length Limit	Production Time	Participation	Specific Techniques	Flexibility with assignment
commercial	papers indicating planning due upon completion	58 seconds	2 ½ weeks	self-selected group projects but with specific roles	special effect, specific transitions, graphics, etc.	Graded in part on successful use of required parts
choice of demonstration video, PSA, video essay, music video, newscast or magazine show, documentary (Nonfiction), short film (fiction), autobiography, or biography	papers indicating planning due upon completion	5 minutes	3 weeks	self-selected group projects but with specific roles	special effect, specific transitions, graphics, etc.	Graded in part on successful use of required parts
<i>Suburban High, Advanced Television Production</i>						
news program	whole class as guided by teacher	5 minutes	1 class period +, Broadcast live 4 days a week	whole class with assigned positions	As teacher instructed	Cross-training and self-selection in some areas
interviews	unknown	short?	unknown	self-selected group projects but with specific roles	none	
coverage of field trip to engine repair and drag racing event	unknown	10? minutes for contest	unknown	self-selected group projects but with specific roles	none	
presentation for district of students being honored	with teacher	none	unknown	selected group	none	
<i>Suburban High, Video Club</i>						
video year book	as club	none	almost all year	self-selected group	none	

General Assignment	Planning	Length Limit	Production Time	Participation	Specific Techniques	Flexibility with assignment
<i>Urban High, New Media 1</i>						
silent video, conveying tension, climax, and resolution	encouraged	none	1 week	self-selected group	none	
How To Video	paper work and proposal required for access to camera	about 15 minutes	no definite deadline	self-selected groups of 3-4 students	none	additional students helped
Public Service Announcement	paper work and proposal required for access to camera	1 minute	1 month	self-selected group	none	length limits not enforced
<i>Urban High, New Media 2</i>						
fictional story	script and proposal required for access to camera	none	semester	The project belonged to 1 person but involved several students in specific roles.	none	The only project in production did not use a script. Work was stopped due to problem.
interviews	paper work required	none	2 weeks	individual work	none	none progressed beyond paper
<i>Urban High, New Media 3</i>						
action-reaction piece	script and storyboard required	15 seconds	2 weeks	self-selected groups	none	Project abandoned by instructor.
How To Video	unknown	unknown	no definite deadline	self-selected groups	none	
commercial	script and storyboard required	about 1 minute	no definite deadline	self-selected groups with specific roles	none	Some exceptions for script and storyboard

<b>General Assignment</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Length Limit</b>	<b>Production Time</b>	<b>Participation</b>	<b>Specific Techniques</b>	<b>Flexibility with assignment</b>
PSA	script/story board required	about 1 minutes	no definite deadline	self-selected groups with specific roles	none	Some exceptions for script and storyboard
Media News Project	none	3-5 minutes	no definite deadline	self-selected groups with specific roles	60% b-roll	none

## **Appendix B: *Focal Students and Focal Projects***

### **The Students**

A total of 41 students volunteered to have their video projects copied, but due to missing tapes and some members of groups choosing not to participate, the work of all students could not be included. Most students were interviewed but not all and the conditions of interviews were inconsistent. All face-to-face interviews of focal students included narration of some or all of their video work. Unless otherwise indicated, the pseudonyms were selected by students, and personal information was as described by the student during the interview.

**Table B1: Descriptions of Focal Students and Their Interviews**

School	Course	Pseudonym	Age/Grade	Ethnicity	Interview Details
Urban High	Media 1	Skinny	17, 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	Hispanic <sup>1</sup>	group, last day of school
		Abbey	16, 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	Hispanic	
		Ed	17, 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	Hispanic	
		Turkey	16, 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	Hispanic	
		Rosemary	17, 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	Hispanic	alone, next semester
		Lynn*	11 <sup>th</sup> grade*	Latina*	none
		Rachel	14, 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	African American	phone during the break
		Tiffany	15, 10 <sup>th</sup> grade	confusing: African American but actually half British Honduran and half Haitian	phone during the break
	Media 2 & 3	Spike	17, 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	Latino and Spanish	phone during next semester
		Mary	17, 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	Hispanic and Latino	alone on last day
Media 3		Cory	16, 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	Hispanic	alone on last day
Boarding High	2	Wicket	16, 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	Zuni, Native American	alone after school
		Jerome	15, freshman	Native American	alone after school

Suburban High	1	Bobby <sup>2</sup>	17, 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	Hispanic	alone
		Bradley*	unknown	Latino*	none
		Nate*	unknown	Latino*	none
	2	Luke*	17, senior	Caucasian	alone
		Catherine*	unknown	Latina*	none
		Bob	15, freshman	white	alone
		Hope*	senior*	European American*	none
		Ellen*	senior*	European American*	none
		Valic	17, junior	Caucasian	alone
		Pablo*	unknown	Latino*	none
		Ricardo*	unknown	Latino*	none

\* These names or pieces of information did not come from the students.

<sup>1</sup> He said that he does not like the term "Latino" because he associates it with Mexicans

whereas he and his friends were from Central America.

<sup>2</sup> Bobby was identified by the teacher as a "special ed" student.

## The Videos

Although 96 video projects were observed during the nine courses, only 16 were copied for analysis. Some videos that were not copied have been discussed based on field notes and memory because they made an impression; they stood out in some fashion and deserved noting, but the edited and unedited videotapes of volunteers were sought for closer analysis. Table X lists the 16 video projects, who worked on them, and what portions of the work was obtained for analysis.

Missing work and additional projects were not obtained because they were lost and thus unavailable for copying.

**Table B2: Video Projects Copied for Analysis**

<b>Project description</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Official Project Participants</b>	<b>Edited ?</b>	<b>Material Obtained</b>
<b>From Suburban High</b>				
1) "Mentos" commercial It is about an effeminate male who gets beat up until he eats Mentos.	commercial	Bobby, Bradley, and Nate	Yes	Unedited work only
2) Documentary about violence and fighting It includes interviews and a recording of mock fighting, being done for another video project.	final project selected from list of genres	Bobby	No, hard drive crashed	All that was done
3) "[Suburban High's] Performing Arts Senior Video 2002" A piece featuring seniors and shown at a school awards dinner for the Performing Arts. It consisted of still photographs, interviews, and music selected by featured students.	final project selected from list of genres	Bob, Hope, and Ellen	Yes	Edited work only
4) "Drunk Driving" Recorded entirely by one student at his home with his sister playing the part of the driver, who has an accident.	commercial	Valic, Catherine, Pablo, and Ricardo	Yes	Edited work only

Project description	Assignment	Official Project Participants	Edited ?	Material Obtained
<p>5) "The Good, The Bad, And The Techies"</p> <p>A documentary of the student run television news program, containing impromptu interviews, shots of students working and playing, and part of one song.</p>	<p>final project selected from list of genres</p>	<p>Valic, Catherine, and Luke</p>	<p>Yes, but with insufficient time</p>	<p>Edited and two days worth of unedited work</p>
<p>6) The video yearbook</p> <p>This consists entirely of still photographs set to music and titles inserted.</p>	<p>Club project</p>	<p>Video club members</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Edited work only</p>
<p><b>From Urban High</b></p>				
<p>7) Untitled project</p> <p>It is about a male student who believes he is being followed until his follower goes into the girls' restroom.</p>	<p>silent recording of event with a growing tension</p>	<p>Skinny, Abbey, Ed, Turkey, and Lynn</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>All the work</p>
<p>8) "Sex Talk"</p> <p>This is about how to have safe sex, including interviews with a school counselor and an array of students and teachers, introductory and segue pieces, and two short skits.</p>	<p>"How to" video</p>	<p>Skinny, Ed, Turkey, Lynn, and Rosemary with Abbey participating unofficially</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>All the work</p>
<p>9) "Don't Drink and Drive"</p> <p>Some girls are shown as they try to prevent a drunk friend from driving, who then hits a pedestrian. It was recorded away from school.</p>	<p>Public Service Announcement</p>	<p>Skinny, Abbey, Ed, Turkey, and Rosemary</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Edited and unedited work</p>

Project description	Assignment	Official Project Participants	Edited ?	Material Obtained
10) Untitled project A demonstration of how to make strawberry shortcake.	“How to” video	Abbey	No	All the work
11) Untitled project A demonstration of how to make a meal of chicken and cheesecake.	“How to” video	Tiffany and Rachel	No	All the work
12) Untitled project It is about safe sex, shot entirely at a classroom table with the students reading their lines and demonstrating the correct way to wear a condom. Another student did the camera work.	Public Service Announcement	Tiffany and Rachel	No	All the work
13) Unfinished movie Based on an unwritten script about a theft. The sound was lost during copying.	fictional movie	Spike with the assistance of several other students.	No	Only the first 20 minutes of work was copied.
14) “The First 4” A set of football clips—taken at the high school games—were put to music with an array of special effects added.	a school news story	Spike, Mary, and Cory	Yes	Edited work only
<b>From Boarding High</b>				
15) Untitled project It includes images of “Jesus,” a church, a helicopter, and a mysterious rooftop antenna distorted by frequent zooming in and out. Music was not included due to technical problems.	an art piece	Jerome and Wicket	Yes	All the work

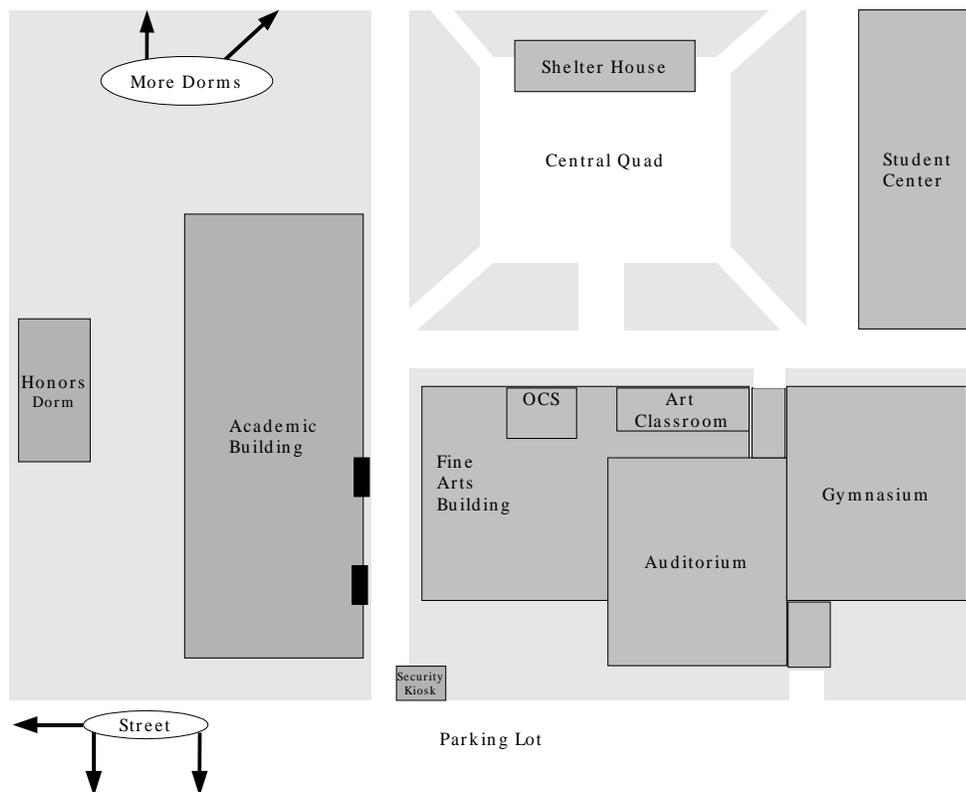
Project description	Assignment	Official Project Participants	Edited ?	Material Obtained
<p>16) "Perspectives"</p> <p>A piece set to music with images of slatted ceilings and trees at odd angles, a crow that seems to turn into a girl with wings, a skeleton of a bird (the only image borrowed and not from school campus), and the participating students.</p>	<p>an art piece</p>	<p>Linda, Mike, Stacy, and Armando with another male student participating the first day</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>All the work</p>

### Appendix C: Simple Maps of Campuses And Classrooms

The following maps are made available to demonstrate where classrooms were within campuses and to further the description of campuses and classrooms. They are rough but provide the basic structure. Maps such as these were used to note the movement of students during production work and other classroom activities.

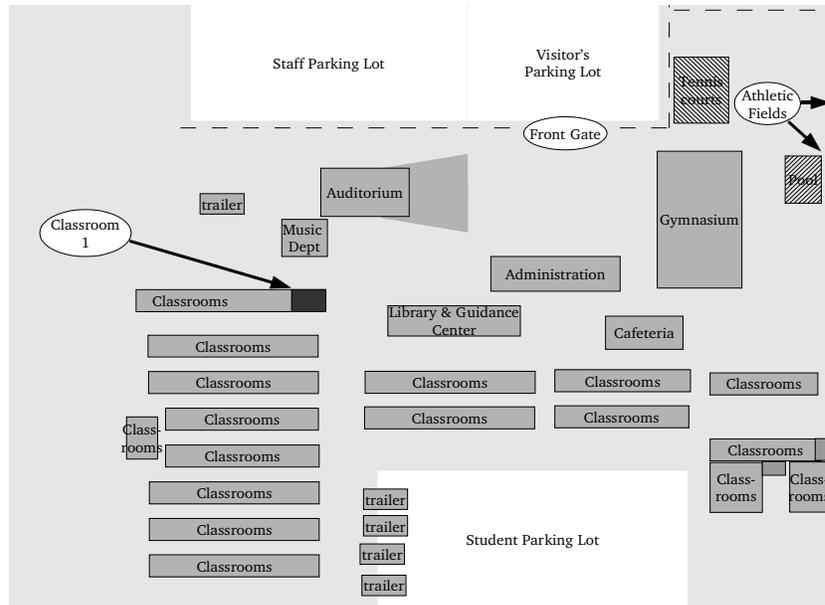
#### **Map 1: The Central Part Of The Boarding High Campus**

The Art Classroom had a door directly to the outside, opening onto the Central Quad. The “OCS” (On Campus Suspension) room was prominent in Wicket and Jerome’s work. The dormitories were above the region shown, and the athletic fields were to the right.

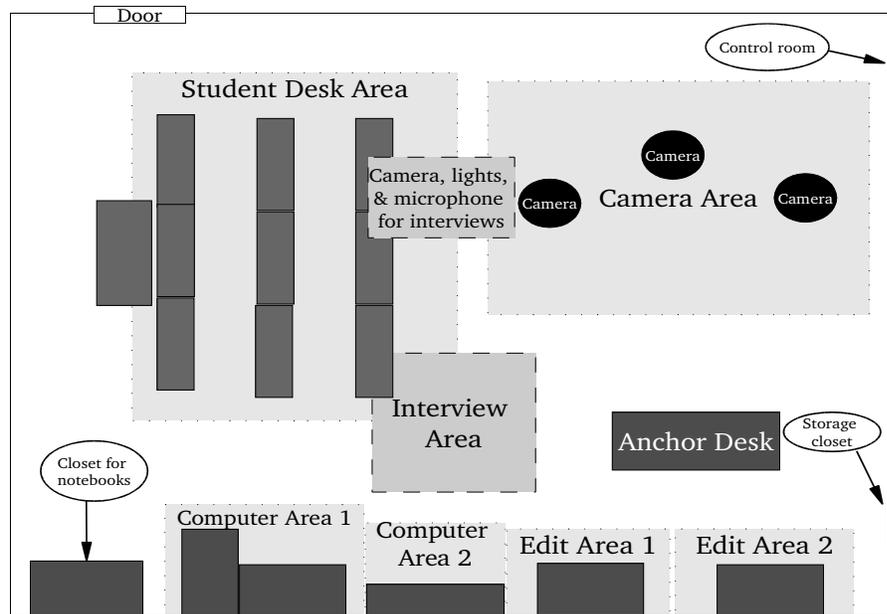


### Map 2: The Central Part Of The Urban High School Campus

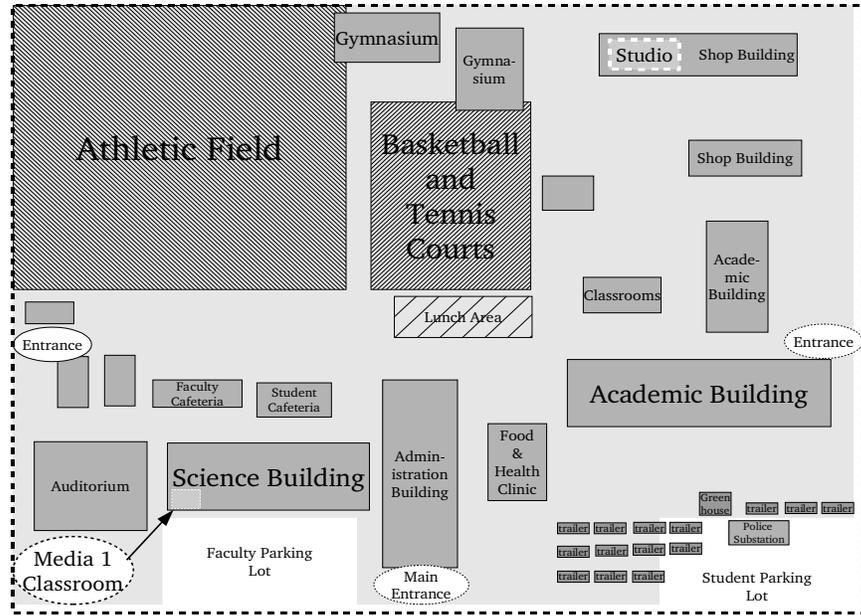
A major street lay along the top border of the map. A side street was beyond the athletic fields on the right, connecting to the student parking lot via a driveway. Houses were to the left, and a small park was on the lower perimeter



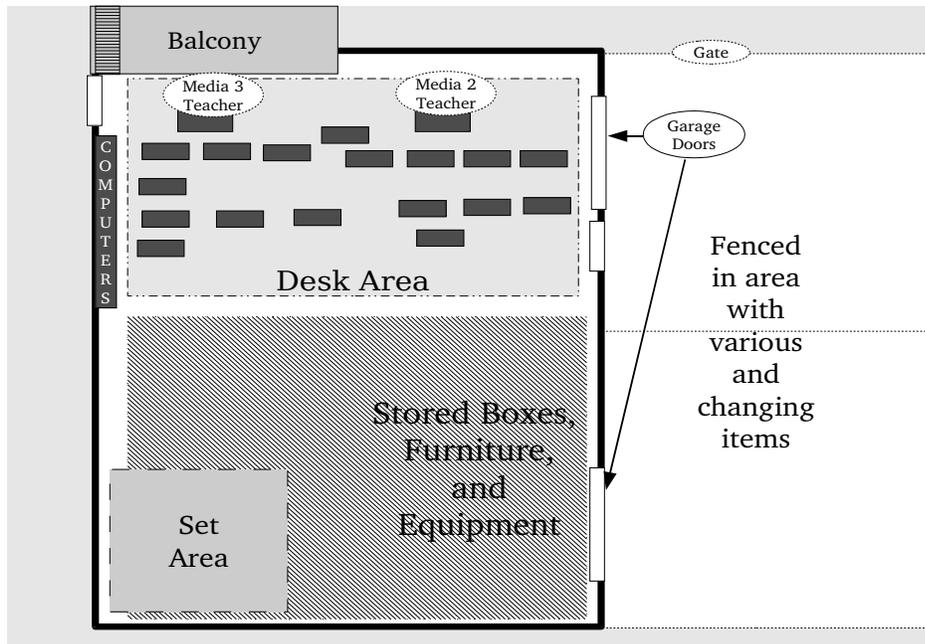
### Map 3: The Television Production Classroom: "Room 1"



Map 4: The Whole Urban High Campus, Bounded On All Sides By Streets



Map 5: The “Studio” At Urban High With The Different Areas Indicated. This was the arrangement during part of the first observed semester.



## References

American Film Institute (n.d.a). *AFI screen education*. Retrieved January 19, 2004, from <http://www.afi.edu>

American Film Institute (n.d.b). *AFI screen education center*. Retrieved January 19, 2004, from <http://www.afi.com>

Awiakta, M. (1993). *Selu: Seeking the Corn-mother's wisdom*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1968). *Rabelais and his world* (H. Iswolsky, Trans.). Cambridge: M.I.T. Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays* (V. W. McGee, Trans.). Austin: University of Texas.

Beaty, L. (1998). Participation in High School: A Study of Speech, Images, and Movement. Unpublished master's thesis, City University of New York Graduate Center, New York, New York.

Beaty, L. (2000). "The Dual Nature of Video Production: High School Students Learning To Change and Learning To Communicate Their Relations with School," 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Ethnography in Education Research Forum, Philadelphia, PA.

Beaty, L. (2003). Power, resistance, and invisibility in high school video production: An exploration of participation styles across genders, ethnicities, and schools," 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Feminist Psychology Conference, Association for Women in Psychology, Jersey City, NJ.

Bellman, B. L., & Jules-Rosette, B. (1977). *A paradigm for looking: Cross-cultural research with visual media*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Bernstein, Basil (1971). *Class, codes and control: Theoretical studies towards a sociology of language* (Vol. 1). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Bransford, J. (2003). Some special features of this special issue: Core values and possible next steps. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 10(1), 80-85.

Bureau of Indian Affairs (2001). *Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*. Retrieved September 2001 at <http://www.doi.gov/bia>

Butler, J. (1997). *The psychic life of power: Theories in subjection*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Chaiklin, S. (2003). The zone of proximal development in Vygotsky's analysis of learning and instruction. In Kozulin, A., Gindis, B., Ageyev, V., & Miller, S. (Eds.), *Vygotsky's educational theory and practice in cultural context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chalfen, R. (1992). Picturing culture through indigenous imagery: A telling story. In P. I. Crawford & D. Turton (Ed.), *Film as ethnography* (pp. 222-241). Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Cole, M. (1996). *Cultural psychology: A once and future discipline*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

De Certeau, M. (1984). *The practice of everyday life* (S. Rendall, Trans.). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Diamondstone, J. (2002). Keeping resistance in view in an activity theory analysis. *Mind, Culture, and Activity: An International Journal*, 9(1), 2-21.

Digital Studio (n.d.a). *Frequently Asked Questions*. Retrieved February 14, 2002 from <http://digitalstudio.ucr.edu>

Digital Studio (n.d.b). *About*. Retrieved January 19, 2004 from <http://digitalstudio.ucr.edu>

Eisenhart, M. (2001). Educational ethnography past, present, and future: Ideas to think with. *Educational Researcher*, 30(8), 16-27.

Eisenstein (1949/1977). *Essays in film history* (J. Leyda, Trans.). San Diego: Harcourt Brace and Company.

Evans, K. (1979). The physical form of the school. *British Journal of Education Studies*, 27(1), 29-41.

Fine, M. (1991). *Framing dropouts: Notes on the politics of an urban public high school*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Fischman, G. E. (2001). Reflections about images, visual culture, and educational research. *Educational Researcher*, 30(8), 28-33.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Galican, M. (2004). Introduction: High time for “dis-illusioning” ourselves and our media. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 48(1), 7-17.

Gauvain, M. (2001). *The social context of cognitive development..* New York: Guilford Publications.

Gibson, J. J. (1986). *The ecological approach to visual perception*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine.

Glick, J. (1995). Intellectual and manual labor: Implications for developmental theory. In L. Martin, K. Nelson, and E. Tobach (Eds.), *Sociocultural psychology: Theory and practice of and knowing*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Goldman-Segall, R. (1998). *Points of viewing children's thinking: A digital ethnographer's journey*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Goodman, S. (2003). *Teaching youth media: A critical guide to literacy, video production, and social change*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Goodnow, J. J. (1990). The socialization of cognition: What's involved? In R. A. S. J. W. Stigler, & G. Herdt (Ed.), *Cultural psychology: Essays on comparative human development* (pp. 259-286). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gutierrez, K. D., Baquedano-Lopez, P. & Tejada, C. (1999). Rethinking diversity: Hybridity and hybrid language practices in the third space. *Mind, Culture, and Activity: An International Journal*, 6(4), 286-303.

Hammond, L. A. (2003). Building houses, building lives. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 10(1), 26-41.

Hemmings, A. (2000). The "hidden" corridor curriculum. *The High School Journal*, 83, 1-10.

Hickey, D. T. (2003). Engaged participation versus marginal nonparticipation: A stridently sociocultural approach to achievement motivation. *The Elementary School Journal*, 103 (4), 401-429.

Hobbes, R. (2004). A review of school-based initiatives in media literacy education. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 48(1), 42-59.

Hodge, R., & Kress, G. (1988). *Social semiotics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Hodges, D. C. (1998). Participation as dis-identification with/in a community of practice. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 5 (4), 272-290.

Holland, D., Lachicotte, W., Jr., Skinner, D., & Cain, C. (1998). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Holzman, L. (1997). *Schools for growth: Radical alternatives to current educational models*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Honey, M., & Collins, A. (2003). Remembering Jan Hawkins. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 10(1), 90-92.

Latour, B. (1996). On interobjectivity. *Mind, Culture, and Activity: An International Journal*, 3(4), 228-245.

Lawrence, J. A., and Valsiner, J. (1993). Conceptual roots of internalization: From transmission to transformation. *Human Development*, 36, 150-167.

Lee, C. D. (2003). Toward a framework for culturally responsive design in multimedia computer environments: Cultural modeling as a case. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 10(1), 42-61.

Lefebvre, H. (1974). *The production of space* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Lemke, J. (1993). *Talking science: Language, learning, and values*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.

Lemke, J. (1995) *Textual Politics: Discourse and Social Dynamics*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Lemke, J. (2001). Across the scales of time: Artifacts, activities, and meanings in ecosocial systems. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 7(4), 273-290.

Lin, X., & Hatano, G. (2003). Technology, culture, and adaptive minds: An introduction. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 10(1), 3-8.

Lin, X., & Schwartz, D. L. (2003). Reflection at the crossroads of cultures. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 10(1), 9-25.

Litowitz, B. E. (1993). Deconstruction in the zone of proximal development. In E. A. Forman, N. Minick, and C. A. Stone (Eds.), *Contexts for learning: Sociocultural dynamics in children's development* (pp. 184-196). New York: Oxford University Press.

Litowitz, B. E. (1997). Just say no: Responsibility and resistance. In M. Cole, Y. Engström, and O. Vasquez (Eds.), *Mind, culture, and activity: Seminal papers from the laboratory of comparative human cognition* (pp. 473-484). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Miller, S. M., & Borowicz, S. (2003). City voice, city visions: Digital video as literacy/learning supertool in urban classrooms. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Education Research Association, Chicago.

Newman, Griffin, & Cole (1989). *The construction zone: Working for cognitive change in school*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Packer, M. J. (1993). Away from internalization. In N. M. E. A. Forman, & C. A. Stone (Ed.), *Contexts for learning: Sociocultural dynamics in children's development* (pp. 254-268). New York: Oxford University Press.

Reilly, B. (1998). *New media and new literacies: Understanding the culture of a high school video production classroom*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley. Available: <http://www.education.ucr.edu/breilly>

Rivlin, L. G., & Wolfe, M. (1985). *Institutional settings in children's lives*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Schofield, J. W., and Davidson, A. L. (2003). The impact of internet use on relationships between teachers and students. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 10(1), 62-79.

Schwebel, A. I., & Cherlin, D. L. (1972). Physical and social distancing in teacher-pupil relationships. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 63(6), 543-550.

Smith, L. (1996). With knowledge in mind: Novel transformation of the learner or transformation of novel knowledge. *Human Development*, 39, 257-263.

Sommer, R., & Becker, F. (1974). Learning outside the classroom. In T. G. D. B. D. Wright (Ed.), *Learning Environments* (pp. 75-81). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Spain, D. (1992). *Gendered spaces*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Stetsenko, A., & Arievitch, I. (1997). Constructing and deconstructing the self: Comparing post-Vygotskian and discourse-based versions of social constructivism. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 4(3), 159-172.

Stetsenko, A., & Arievitch, I. (2004). The self in cultural-historical activity theory: Reclaiming the unity of social and individual dimensions of human development. *Theory & Psychology*, 14(4), 475-503.

US Department of Education (n.d.). Title 1, Part A Program: Purpose. Retrieved January 22, 2004, from <http://www.ed.gov/programs>

Valsiner, J. (1997). *Culture and the development of children's action: A theory of human development*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). Interaction between learning and development. In M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, and E. Souberman (Eds.), *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* (pp. 79-91).

Vygotsky, L. (1994). The development of thinking and concept formation in adolescence. In R. v. d. V. J. Valsiner (Ed.), *The Vygotsky Reader* (pp. 185-265). Oxford: Blackwell.

Vygotsky, L., & Luria, A. (1994). Tool and symbol in child development. In R. v. d. V. J. Valsiner (Ed.), *The Vygotsky Reader* (pp. 95-174). Oxford: Blackwell.

Wertsch, J. V. (1985). *Vygotsky and the social formation of mind*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Wertsch, J. V., & Stone, C. A. (1985). The concept of internalization in Vygotsky's account of the genesis of higher mental functions. In J. V. Wertsch (Ed.), *Culture, communication, and cognition: Vygotskian perspectives* (pp. 162-182). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wertsch, J. V., Tulviste, P., & Hagstrom, F. (1993). A sociocultural approach to agency. In N. M. E. A. Forman, & C. A. Stone (Ed.), *Contexts for learning: Sociocultural dynamics* (pp. 336-356). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Workforce LA (n.d.a). *History of the New Media Academies*. [Brochure] Los Angeles: Author.

Workforce LA (n.d.b) *New media academies*. [Brochure] Los Angeles: Author.

Worth, S. (1981). *Studying visual communication*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Worth, S., & Adair, J. (1972). *Through Navajo eyes: An exploration in film communication and anthropology*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Zettl, H. (1995). *Video basics*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.