

Guest Editors' Introduction

Howard A. Smith and Pierre Trudel

At the 1999 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) held in Montréal, a group of researchers participated in a symposium organized by François Tochon on *Video and the Construction of Meaning: Development in Applied Semiotics*. Because of the high quality of the presentations, it was agreed at the meeting that a special issue on this topic should be created for the *International Journal of Applied Semiotics*. Several months later, we accepted Linda Rogers' invitation to act as guest editors for this special issue. Because the project originated with an invitation from François Tochon, we thought it appropriate to ask François why he decided to organize the symposium. He responded as follows:

The mature science of video acquisition and the emerging technology of digital distribution will change the way we see education as a whole. The proliferation of computer-based video editing systems and DVD [Digital Video Display] opens an educational market with stunning possibilities in terms of learning and teaching, meaning-making, image-sharing, access to new languages (there are different channels for different language translations on a DVD), distance learning, and media literacy. Actually video is a new literacy, and we think that editing a video will become as common in classrooms as was writing an essay.

Video technology enters the field of applied semiotics in its own right. It brings meaning to life and life to signs. It is educational *per se*. That is why we cannot let this field lie fallow. The purpose of the symposium was to collect our know-how in terms of meaning-making and of semiotic research applied to education. Making a video is becoming a form of expression. It is also an entry into experience. It requires good storytelling. At all levels of the school system, we perceive crucial needs for video input and day-to-day use of lived images and feedback. This is a growing concern from kindergarten to grad school, and there is a tremendous need for some kind of support. But neither the teachers nor the educational researchers seem to possess the basic knowledge necessary for a sound use of that technology. As Stinson (1998) suggests, speech and debate classes are often routinely taped for

later analysis. Videos appear useful for improving performance, but nobody really knows how to analyze them or to monitor video in a pedagogical way. Through this symposium, we made an effort in that direction.

Our first tasks in immortalizing the symposium were to ask presenters to submit their conference papers and to seek the involvement of several other voices. The result of our efforts is this special issue, composed of eight articles and one book review. As a corpus, these contributions cover a wide range of possibility in constructing meaning through the use of video. The first article, by Tochon, sets the stage by presenting a review of the literature about video feedback and explaining how digital video can support new approaches in education. The next three articles offer excellent examples of how video can be used in work with teachers. Nancy Stockall uses videotaped interaction between students and teachers to examine the unfolding/enfolding semiosis of self-construction through a dialectic with teachers viewing themselves in action. Caroline Gwyn-Paquette experiments with the video study group approach involving a group of pre-service teachers. And in his article, Philippe Chaussecourte uses a microanalysis of two interventions in a seventh-grade mathematics class to demonstrate how one can make more systematic use of the image to analyze the practices of teachers.

Karin Steiner Bell and Howard Smith remind us that video can also be used to help the learners. Using a case-study approach, they provide an example of how video can be utilized to help an individual with autism make associations from lessons to life. The article by Pierre Trudel, Wade Gilbert, and Tochon provides an overview of the use of video in sport pedagogy, and describes how the authors have used this research tool in their efforts to better understand the coaching-learning process. Chrysoula Fantaousakis appeals to semiotic and sociocultural concepts in order to examine how young children come to acquire video mastery. Stanton Wortham extends the use of video to analysis of the verbal and visual cues in one television news story. And the final piece of this special issue is François Desjardins' book review of *Video Study Groups for Education, Professional Development, and Change*, written by Tochon and published in 1999 (Atwood Publishing).

We hope that a major contribution of this special issue is to highlight some ways in which semiotic insights can be used to inform the use of video in educational practice. In this effort, many colleagues have helped us. In particular we wish to express our thanks to the international array of reviewers who, often under very short deadlines, gave their time, energy, and insights in reviewing the manuscripts and in providing helpful comments to the authors:

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