

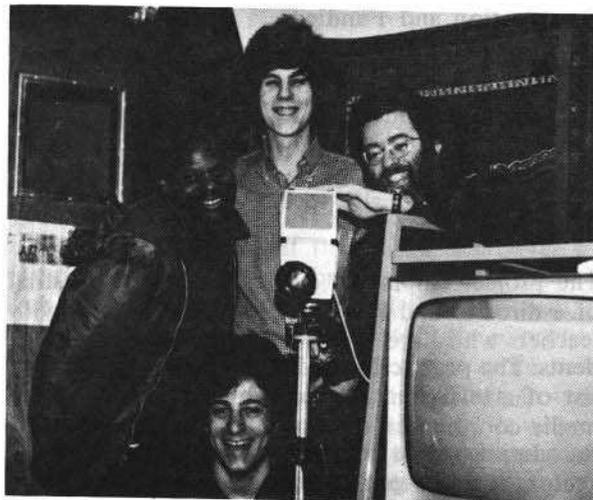
the most complex and ambitious project of the year, a documentary on Black History. Students selected the areas of the topic to be covered, chose stills from various sources, added music tracks, poems, and speeches. Re-edited until the tape became brittle, it was shown during Black History week. Then the student-producer remade the tape completely. This final tape, in spite of the technical limitations of a 1 VTR system, is more cinematic and entertaining than any instructional film, tape or filmstrip on the topic that I've seen.

Studio Shows

Other tapes included an improvisation of a confrontation on "cutting" classes, an illustrated fashion show, Black News, spoofs of advertising, a monologue on undersea life and communication with dolphins, and vehement discussions about jobs, the future, and college.

A different type of production was aimed at integrating intensive verbal drills with the quiz show format.

Questions based on pronunciation, spelling, synonyms, antonyms and rhyming pairs of words were flashed on the monitor, a student would signal and have his answer taped. A student emcee kept up the swift pace, making it an enjoyable exercise. We noticed that if the same question were repeated in different games, the students always remembered. General knowledge and sports quizzes were also successful. Our version of Password was very popular. In particular, the sports quiz revealed stunning verbal and quantitative achievement, obvious-



Ricardo Wainsztein

ly resulting from significant outside reading on the topic, among students put off by most school work.

The year ended with a tour of the NBC studios in Manhattan, tying in our work with an appreciation of the mass media. Hopefully, some of the students are now media-literate enough to understand or even alter some of the effects of the media environment. They'd better be, because never before, as Huxley said, have so many listeners been at the mercy of so few speakers.

Video isn't a panacea for the communications needs of students, but schools, our most print-oriented institutions, must begin to work with, not against, the media to which students have tuned their senses.

Video Catalyst

PETER HARATONIK

On Broadway a group of 10-year-olds are taping a video play in a neighborhood store. About four miles away on the Lower East Side a group of sixth graders are preparing to tape speakers at an Earth Day Celebration. Two thousand miles west, noted filmmaker Stan Brakage is using a portable video system in his discussion of image making with high school students. And in Birmingham, Alabama, a crew from a local Educational TV station is preparing for a visit from a New York filmmaker who will work with students in the production of a major local television show.

All these events have something in common besides video. They're all part of programs planned and coordinated by the Center for Understanding Media in New York. The Center, founded in 1969 by

John Culkin, is a non-profit organization which specializes in projects involving young people and the new media.

What the Center seeks to do is to plan, develop, and carry out a variety of activities which will ensure a better understanding of media in its broadest sense - to create a totally integrated program in the arts and humanities. Our work is primarily being done in three areas: teacher training, model site programs and the development of projects involving professional media artists in teaching roles. In implementing goals and programs designing these three areas are deeply integrated. For us to develop an in-school project without adequately training teachers (who in most cases are not equipped to deal with new technologies in either a practical or