The Poetics and Pleasures of Video Ethnography of Education

Joseph Tobin
Arizona State University

Yeh Hsueh
University of Memphis

The central argument of this chapter is that in thinking about the uses of video in educational research, we should break free of educational videos' roots in instructional films and observational analysis, and add to the goals of documenting and informing the goals of provoking self-reflection, challenging assumptions, creating things of beauty, entertaining, and giving pleasure. When we enter into video making with this expanded set of goals in mind, we end up with very different sorts of videos than if we begin with only the first set. And these more aesthetically pleasing, entertaining, compelling videos are not just pleasing and entertaining—they also make for more effective social science.

THE NEW "PRESCHOOL IN THREE CULTURES" STUDY

We are in the midst of conducting a major study, "Continuity and Change in Preschools of Three Cultures." This study is a sequel to *Preschool in Three Cultures: Japan, China, and the U.S.* (Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989). In the new study, we are using basically the same method that was used in the original. In this method, which we sometimes call "video-cued multivocal ethnography," the videos function primarily neither as data nor as description but instead as rich nonverbal cues designed to stimu-

late critical reflection. In developing this method, we were heavily influenced by the ethnographic film *Jero on Jero: A Balinese Trance Séance Observed* (1981), in which the filmmakers Timothy and Patsy Asch and the anthropologist Linda Connor first filmed a trance séance and then returned to the field to show the footage of herself in a trance and to ask her to comment on her actions (Connor, Asch, & Asch, 1986). Our particular methodological contribution was to combine this use of video as a tool for feedback (Rouch, 1995) and as a "mnemonic device" (Asch & Asch, 1995) with James Clifford's 1983 call for ethnographies to be multivocal texts, Jay Ruby's admonition that ethnographic films be considered not objective data but reflexive mirrors (1982), and Mikhail Bakhtin's writings on heteroglossia, dialogism, and answerability (1981, 1986, 1990). The result is a method in which videotape is used to provoke reflection not just from the teachers videotaped, but also from their colleagues, their supervisors, and from their counterparts in other cities and other countries.

The steps of the method are straightforward. We (1) videotape a day in a preschool; (2) edit the tape down to 20 mins; (3) show the edited tape to the classroom teacher, and ask her to comment and offer explanations; (4) hold focus-group discussions of the tape with other staff at the preschool; (5) hold focus-group discussions with staff of other preschools around the country (to address the question of typicality); and (6) hold focus-group discussions with staff of preschools in the two other countries in the study.

In the preschool in three cultures method, as originally conceived, the goal was to produce as a final product not a video, but a book, based on an interweaving of the voices of the staff of preschools in three countries, explaining and evaluating videotapes of days in their own and each others' preschools. But once the study was completed and the book published, we realized that the footage had value beyond its use as a research tool. Although we didn't intend for the tapes to have a life of their own, independent of the book, this is just what's happened. We've distributed about 1,000 copies of the videotape from the first study, most of which have been bought by universities for use in classes, which suggests that the tapes have been seen by many more people than those who have read the book.

The knowledge that the videos we are making for the new study will not only be just research tools but also one of our final products is daunting—we were trained primarily as scholars, which means as writers, not as filmmakers. Making videos that function as research tools is one thing; making videos that can stand on their own is quite another. In the original study, the videos turned out to be far better than we planned or could have hoped, considering that we had very little filmmaking experience and virtually no budget—the original video was shot on borrowed, consumer grade camcorders. For the new study, we have a grant from the Spencer Foundation that has allowed us to purchase "prosumer" level equipment and to edit not, as in the first project, from one VCR deck to another, but in Final Cut Pro on a Macintosh computer. This top of the line equipment, combined with our years of experience and the higher level of technical expertise gathered on our new team should make for a better set of videos. But, in fact, there is no guarantee this will be the case (or, for that matter, that the new book will be better than the old just because the first author is older and wiser). Video making and book writing are tough, uncertain enterprises.

For videos of classrooms to function effectively as provocations and stimuli, they must be hybrid constructions, blurred genres that are simultaneously social scientific documents and works of art—if they come across as insufficiently systematic, they will be dismissed for lacking rigor; if they feel insufficiently artful, they will be ignored for being boring and visually unappealing. This is a daunting challenge to educational researchers considering using video because it calls on skills most of us weren't taught in graduate school and on abilities many of us fear we don't have, abilities we associate more with artists than with scholars.

In this chapter, using as an example a videotape we shot in 2002 in a preschool in Kyoto, Japan, we foreground the importance of character, plot, narrative, drama, and aesthetics in the construction of classroom video ethnography. We also discuss the tensions between art and science and between aesthetics and drama that are inherent in our project, and more generally, in the field of educational videography.

Shooting Goals.   We go to preschools with some predetermined criteria for what to shoot:

Routines.   Days in preschools are predictable in structure, across as well as within cultures. In order to facilitate cross-cultural comparison, we shoot and edit our videos to include a set of routines found in the all three countries' preschools; arrival; free play; bathroom; lesson; lunch; nap; snack; departure. By organizing the videos around these routines, we provide a context for comparison. It is in the ways preschools across cultures manage the same set of routines that cultural differences emerge most clearly.

Key Issues.   Each scene in our videos function as a nonverbal question. This is based on the idea of Henry Murray (the father of the Thematic Apperception Test) that each TAT card in the collection would elicit information on a different psychological issue. For example, Card 1, a drawing of a boy sitting in front of a violin, was included to get at conflicts about achievement motivation. Key issues we videotape include separation problems (scenes of children and parents having trouble saying goodbye in the morning); fighting (including not just the behavior of the fighting children but also the reactions of their classmates and teachers); misbehavior (for example, a child refusing to follow directions or share); mixed-aged play; and intimacy between teachers and children (for example, a teacher comforting a crying child).

Provocative Issues.   As we shoot and edit our videos, we include scenes that we anticipate will be provocative to viewers. For example, in our new Komatsudani videotape, one of the most provocative and controversial scenes is one that shows the school's bus driver and aide drying off the children after swimming. What makes this scene particularly provocative is not just that it shows a man physically caring for young children, but also that the children are naked and the man shirtless and heavily muscled. Provocation, of course, is in the eye of the beholder. This scene elicited little or no reaction when we showed it to the staff at Komatsudani and in other Japanese preschools, but it invariably provokes a strong reaction in American viewers, for whom

Figure 5.1.   Drying children.

PAGE PROOFS

it stimulates discussions of males working in the field of early childhood education and more generally of the moral panics swirling in the contemporary United States around questions of sexuality, touch, and young children.

These first three concerns that guide our videotaping—routines, key issues, and provocative issues—reflect our perspective as social scientists. But for our method to work, we have to think beyond these concerns, to think not just like social scientists but also like artists. This means we have to be concerned that our videos be compelling, gripping, engaging, and beautiful. This leads us to shoot and edit with a second set of concerns in mind:

Protagonists.   We need strong central characters. This is one area where most videos made by educational researchers fall short. A classroom has too many characters to fit into one coherent storyline. A good teacher appreciates the unique personalities and concerns of each of her students, but a viewer of a 20-min video cannot be expected to pay attention to or care about all of the students in a class. Many educational videos suffer from a dominance of wide shots and a shortage of close-ups, which makes for an absence of compelling characters. Video ethnographers are storytellers and storytellers need to focus on key characters. Before taping in each preschool, we identify four or five children on whom we will focus our cameras' attention. Because our videos

are not data but interviewing cues, we select these key children not randomly, but instead based on those we anticipate are most likely to be at the center of social interactions in the classroom and to be appealing on camera. Because we are shooting spontaneous action and not a scripted play, on the day we tape we inevitably have to modify our list of focal children as other children present more compelling storylines.

In our original Preschool in Three Cultures study, there was one clear star, Hiroki, a naughty 4-year-old boy who interrupted lessons by singing songs from popular cartoons; holding a black crayon up to his crotch and announcing, to the delight of his classmates, that he had a black penis; and stepping on the hand of Satoshi, leading him to burst out in tears. In the new study, the new Hiroki is Mao, the youngest and least mature of the 4-year-olds at Komatsudani, who holds on to her mother's leg in the morning at the school gate; refuses to share a stuffed bear; and engages in a prolonged verbal and physical battle over a stuffed bear.

Dramatic Tension. This is another area where educational videos come up short. We should think of our videos as not (just) data or lessons but also and perhaps primarily as narratives. Our videos need a narrative structure more compelling than the steps of a lesson plan or the movement through a series of daily routines. Every day in every preschool there are lots of good stories. In addition to the teacher, each student is potentially the protagonist of his/her own story, a story with hopes and dreams,

Figure 5.2.   Mao holding Mom's leg.

antagonists and allies, and twists and turns as the day plays out and for each child, reaches its denouement. All of these stories are potentially worth telling, but in each of our 20-min videos, we have to limit ourselves to telling just one or two. In our new Komatsudani videotape, the core storyline is Mao's complicated relationship with the older girls in her class, who alternately taunt, correct, and comfort her.

Visually (and Auditorly) Compelling, Attractive, and Inviting.   In educational video making, we often talk about quality, but rarely about aesthetics. Framing shots, remembering to set the white balance, and using a tripod are necessary but not sufficient to produce a video that is visually attractive and inviting and able to hold an audience's attention and give pleasure. The aesthetic quality of an ethnographic video should be thought of not as a luxury but as inherent to the purposes of the project, purposes that should include not just teaching audiences a lesson but also giving them pleasure. Aesthetic quality is a worthwhile goal in its own right and also because its absence carries the possibility of interfering with the audience's flow of attention. Amateurish shots can interrupt audience engagement, but so, too, can slickness. Shots that are out of focus will be irritating to almost every audience, but so are shots that call attention to their artfulness and thus to the video's constructedness, as, for example, shots from odd camera angles or dissolves that break our attention as we picture an editor playing around with an effects generator. An effective ethnographic video is constructed in a way that draws audience attention away from its constructedness.

Figure 5.3.   Mao and other girls wrestling on the floor.

Figure 5.4. "Keep this promise or swallow 1,000 needles."

Figure 5.5. Sachi comforts Mao.

Finding the right level of production values for an educational video is a delicate process, necessitating balancing considerations of genre, settings, budget, and audience expectation. Eighteen years ago, when we made the videos for our original study, audiences were forgiving of our amateurish zooms and framing and of the lack in most scenes of audible children's voices. Now that most families show up at school events with their own video cameras, expectations have risen and aesthetic shortcomings are more likely to work against the state of free flowing engagement that we are after. Moreover, attractive images and good sound better reflect the look and feel of the worlds we are trying to represent. Moments in our video that capture a child choking back a tear when being corrected by a teacher or that record a whispered conspiratorial comment to an ally do not just make our videos aesthetically pleasing but also contribute to the sense of verisimilitude that is a central goal of our filmmaking.

Coherence.   Coherence combines shot and scene continuity with good storytelling to provide the audience with the sense that events are unfolding logically. This sense of coherence is in part an illusion of the editing process. Unlike in making a fictional movie in which scenes can be shot in any order and later assembled to produce a linear structure, we order our shots in the edited version just as they played out in real life (with one exception, as explained later). In reducing an 8-hour day recorded on two cameras to 20 mins, we must cut out many more shots and scenes than we can keep. This cutting process strips from the day the connections that tied one event to the next. We must assemble the shots and scenes in such a way as to create a sense of coherence that approximates the coherence of the original events and that presents the illusion of a whole day passing by in under 20 mins.

In choosing the next clip to add to our running sequence on the time line, we sometimes must choose between what happened next in the school day and what happened next, emotionally, to a key child in our story. (See Sorenson & Jablonko, 1995, for a discussion of the trade-offs between approaches to choosing what to film, which they call "opportunistic sampling," "programmed sampling," and "digressive search.") Another challenge we face is simultaneity of events. There were times when one teacher stayed inside with some children while the other teacher took children out to the playground. We are experimenting with such cinematic tropes as montage and with dissolves and wipes and other transition effects to suggest simultaneous events taking place in two locations, but none of these solutions seems quite right.

The collapsing of time presents a more daunting editing challenge than tying together changes in location. Many young children attend preschool from early in the morning until the early evening. Our videos, which are titled "A Day at (Blank) Preschool," must convey to viewers the sense of a full day. Typically, our first shot is of a child arriving at school before dawn, our last shot a child (sometimes the same child) departing in the twilight. It's tough to reduce 12 or more hours of videotape to fewer than 20 mins. Our first round of editing generally produces a video about one hour long, which we cut to 30 mins the second time through, and then, after several more drafts, down to under 20 mins. A danger of this drastic compression of time is a loss of the sense of the pace of a typical school day. Using a similar number of shots in each of our edited videotapes may give the erroneous impression that the preschools in each

country have a similar pace or tempo. A willingness to allow for "wait time" and for periods of silence are hallmarks of the classroom tempo of talented teachers. But to devote 3 minutes of one of our videos to a teacher waiting for a child to respond to a question would be to give inordinate coverage to one of many interesting events in the day and to risk driving the audience to a degree of ennui that will break their state of attentive viewing. We generally deal with this problem by using transition effects to suggest the passage of time. We admire the work of the documentary filmmaker Nicolas Philibert, who in *Être et Avoir* (2002) captures the extraordinary patience of a teacher of young children by presenting long, unedited sequences in which very little seems to happen.

Trade-Offs

Our project contains inherent tensions necessitating trade-offs, tensions both within and between our social-scientific and aesthetic goals:

The Interests of Teachers, Researchers, and Audiences.   At the end of the week we've spent visiting and videotaping, we show "rushes" to the classroom teacher to get her explanations and reactions while they are still fresh as well as to get some quick feedback on what she would like to have included and dropped from the edited videotape. We use this input to make a rough draft of the video, which we then show to the classroom teacher and director. Based on their reactions, we re-edit the tape, adding scenes they feel are missing and deleting scenes they would rather not have included. There are times when the school staff and we researchers disagree about these edits. There are events recorded in our videos that the teacher or director think are interesting but that we believe will be of little interest or even boring to our audience; events the teacher thinks are mundane that we believe will be of interest to our audience; and events the teacher is embarrassed by or fears will be misleading but that we believe will be among the most interesting and compelling scenes. In these situations, we give teachers and schools the veto to have scenes cut, but we try to negotiate this, to balance their wishes with our research goals and with what we take to be the wishes of our audience. We are aware that although this is a negotiation and that the teachers have the right to veto scenes, that as researchers and filmmakers, we have professional status and experience that gives us greater control than the teachers we videotape over the content of the final product (Tobin & Davidson, 1991).

Audiences of Insiders and Outsiders.   This negotiation between the teachers and we videographers over which scenes to include is related to another concern familiar to ethnographers of both the video and conventional variety; the need to balance the points of view, worldviews, and understandings of insiders and outsiders to the culture being studied. Most ethnographies are stories of the cultural beliefs and practices of a group of insiders written by outsiders for other outsiders to consume. The people studied and videotaped by ethnographers are rarely considered an important audience for the research. There are, happily, exceptions to this rule. Margaret Mead stresses that the primary value of filming cultural practices that

are in danger of disappearing is to provide members of a culture with an archive that can aid cultural preservation (1972/1995). Linda Smith's *Decolonizing Methodology* (1999) offers insights into how ethnography can be restructured so as to serve the interests of those who traditionally have been the objects but not subjects or audience of anthropology. Making a video that can be understood, enjoyed and found both believable and provocative by insiders as well as outsiders to the culture is a tough task. The outsiders we consider as potential audiences for our videos and book are not just literally outsiders in the sense of being foreigners but also metaphorically outsiders, in the sense of being outsiders to the world of early childhood education. We want and intend that our videos and book be watched and read by an audience that includes not just early childhood educators but also anthropologists, sociologists, area specialists, and psychologists.

   Genre.   Is "video shot for educational research purposes" a genre? We would argue that there are several genres of educational video including ethnographies, documentaries, instructional videos, illustrations of best practice, and tools for critical reflection. Before shooting, it is crucial to be clear about what genre of video one is making and to stay true to that genre throughout the shooting and editing. Audiences cannot absorb, enjoy, or learn much from videos that are not of a recognizable genre. Even mixed genre and experimental videos must pay attention to genre questions, for in order to be seen as mixed or experimental they require an audience's knowledge and expectations of generic conventions and restraints. Our videos are a mixture of ethnography and projective tools to stimulate critical reflection. Although they are sometimes used in inservice and preservice teacher education settings, our videos are not documentaries or teacher training films. We have learned that if we include too much explanation in subtitles (as, for example, by adding a title that explains that the older children at Komatsudani routinely care for babies), the genre of our film subtly shifts from stimulus to didactics, and viewers respond less by providing their judgments of what they are viewing ("Wow-I can't imagine letting our older children feed babies. It's too dangerous!") and more by asking informational questions ("Do all of the older children care for babies?"). Once viewers decide that what they are watching is an educational documentary, they adopt a more passive, studentlike stance and drop the critical perspective we want them to bring to their engagement with our tapes.

   Aesthetics Versus Content.   To achieve the highest possible production values we could have hired a professional crew. But we did our own videotaping because we decided that our experience in early childhood classrooms combined with our understanding of the goals of our project allowed us to make decisions about where to aim our cameras not perfectly, but better than a crew we would hire for a week. The decision whether anthropologists should shoot their own films or collaborate with professional filmmakers depends on many factors including concerns about intrusiveness, the project budget, the technical and aesthetic skills of the anthropologist, the genre of the study, and the anticipated audience. Timothy and Patsy Asch recommend that "ethnographers should certainly be encouraged to become filmmakers themselves" because "they should be able to predict more accurately and quickly what is

about to occur. And they will know what aspects of a sequence should be filmed in order to get the data they want" (1995, p. 345). Jean Rouch declares that he "is violently opposed to film crews" because "the ethnologist alone … is the one who knows when, where, and how to film" (1995, p. 87). Margaret Mead argues "the best work is done when filmmaker and ethnographer are combined in the same person" (1995, p. 7).

Having decided for these reasons to do our own taping, we purchased the best equipment we could afford. We later discovered that higher end equipment has its pluses and minuses. It is impressive to schools to see us arrive with professional-looking gear, but it also can be intrusive and off putting. Our prosumer equipment—big cameras, big tripods, headphones, boom mounted shotgun mics, photog vests, and so forth—ended up causing suspicion in Japan among some parents, who questioned the preschool's director about our purposes in taping at the school. Even though the parents knew that foreign researchers would be taping in classrooms that week, the gestalt we projected turned out to be a bit too much like a TV crew and not enough like academic researchers.

Technical Trade-Offs.   Adding a second camera doubles your chances of getting good footage, but it also makes shooting and editing far more difficult. Movies and TV have perfected the grammar of the two-camera edit (establishing wide shot, over shoulder shot, reaction shot, and so forth), a grammar we borrow, not only because we lack imagination to shoot and edit otherwise but also because we would be foolish to not follow a convention our audience knows so well how to read. But because we shoot in real time, without the luxury of retakes, because we are always shooting "on location" in less than ideal sound and lighting conditions, and because we are not professional camera operators, it often turns out that the footage from the two cameras we would like to shuffle into one sequence cannot be easily combined. We tried to anticipate this challenge by sketching out camera locations for each activity of the day, with both cameras on the same side of the plane of action, so the protagonists in a scene will not suddenly jump from the right to left side as we cut from one camera to the other. But we are nevertheless forced at the time of editing to make excruciating choices between the shots from each camera. Our most excruciating two-camera editing dilemma so far comes at the denouement of our most dramatic scene, the girl's fighting over the stuffed bear. As Mao is led away in tears from her battle over the bear by Sachi, who offers consoling words and puts her arm around Mao's shoulder, a careful viewer can see the second camera and camera crew in the mirror in the rear of the image. Here, because Sachi's empathetic response in the aftermath of the altercation is crucial to appreciating one of the potential benefits of a teacher not intervening in a dispute among children, we have chosen to risk seeming amateurish by leaving in a clumsy shot.

As we edit the videos, we struggle with the question of how long shots need to be in order to avoid a sense of choppiness viewers will find annoying and distracting. What counts as choppy has changed dramatically in the post-MTV era. We notice that even for our mature eyes, shots that would have seemed too short 18 years ago now seem fine. Another technical issue is the balance of wide shots and close-ups. In the first Preschool in Three Cultures study, we planned what we would shoot and where we would locate the camera, but we neglected to discuss how much we would zoom in

Figure 5.6.   Camera visible in the background.

on individual children. When it was time to edit the tapes, we discovered that the footage in China, shot by David Wu, who was raised in a more group-oriented society, has mostly wide shots of the whole class while the footage Joseph Tobin shot in Japan and the United States featured far more close-ups of individual children, reflecting the American cultural valorizing of individuality. In the new study, our whole research team videotaped in all three countries, leading to a more uniform mixture of wide, medium, and close-up shots.

We continue to wonder how much time we should spend in the classroom familiarizing ourselves and letting the kids and teacher get used to us before we begin videotaping. The answer might seem to be, "as much as possible." But this turned out not to be the case. At each school, we spent Monday in the classroom without the cameras, Tuesday with the cameras set up but not actually videotaping, and then Wednesday videotaping. Being around for a couple of days before taping worked well to get the children to stop looking at the camera. But it also produced fatigue, especially for the teachers, who seemed by the third day ready to get the taping over with and return to normal life. The fatigue is caused largely by the energy it takes to perform a version of themselves for the cameras. This is not to say that in our videos that the teachers behave artificially or insincerely, but rather that teaching in front of the cameras is inherently challenging. No matter how long we hang out in the classroom before taping, we can-

not claim that our presence made no difference. We anthropologists know that even when we do our research without cameras, our presence must be taken into account. With cameras, our presence is more potentially intrusive and likely to cause changes in routines. We instructed the teachers (not always successfully) to do what they would normally have done had we not been present videotaping. But even if the same lessons are taught and routines followed, the mood, comportment, and behaviors of the teacher and children inevitably change. How could it be otherwise? In our method, this is not as big a problem as it is for most ethnographers and filmmakers. When we show the tapes to the teacher, the first question we ask her is, "In other words, does this look like a typical day?" How did our presence change you and the kids? Were you nervous? Do the kids look different?

   Providing Context Through Subtitling and Narration.   We add no narration to the stimulus tapes, for to do so would be to cue viewers to which aspects of the tapes we think are most important and to provide explanations for teacher's practices, two tasks that our method dictates must be left up to the viewer. Like projective tests, our research tapes are intentionally ambiguous. But ambiguity is not the same thing as confusion or incoherence. As in the construction of a TAT card, a research video has to be optimally ambiguous—the question to be answered should be clear, only the answer ambiguous. For example, in the scene in which Mao fights over the bear, what is going on should be clear to the audience; all that should be unclear is whether the teacher is wrong not to intervene. Our decision was to provide subtitles of what's said by the teachers and students, but no narration. The absence of narration in our stimulus tapes behooves us to provide as much clarifying context as possible through the strategic use of images. In the case of the fight over the doll, images we use include close-ups of little hands gripping a doll and of children pushing and shoving as the teacher's body moves through the frame, to show that she was in the vicinity during the altercation, and thus could have intervened if she had chosen to.
   The ambiguity we build into our research tapes to make them an effective tool for interviewing, we reduce when we re-edit the tapes into a final product. As discussed earlier, this is a change of genres, from stimulus tape to ethnographic video. The biggest change we make here is the addition of a narration track that provides the classroom teachers' explanations. The goal of our final products is to present audiences with concrete examples of differences across cultures in praxis, and not just of differences in behavior. A video that presents only cultural variations in teacher and children behavior is what we call "Mondo Kane" video ethnography, in reference to the series of films in the 1960s that presented weird, bizarre, and horrifying cultural practices from around the world. Such scenes can titillate and shock, but not provoke deep reflection unless viewers are helped and pushed to consider the meanings behind the strange behaviors. It is surprising and even disturbing to American viewers that Japanese teachers are slow to intervene in children's fights. Japanese teachers' explanations that they do so to communicate to children that dealing with disputes is a responsibility of the whole class and because they believe that when teachers intervene too quickly, children miss out on opportunities to develop important social skills is deeply challenging

to most American viewers, provoking not just surprise and disapproval but also self-reflection, self-critique, and, in some cases, change in practice.

CONCLUSION: THE MISSING DISCOURSE OF PLEASURE AND DESIRE IN ETHNOGRAPHIC VIDEOS

In "Sexuality, Schooling, and Adolescent Females: The Missing Discourse of Desire," (1988) Michele Fine points out that in sex education class, you can talk about sex in terms of reproduction and as disease, but not in terms of pleasure. This left some of the high school girls in the classes Fine observed wondering if their teacher was a knave or a fool—either she knew sex was pleasurable, and was trying to con them into thinking it wasn't, or she didn't know as much as they did about the pleasures of sex, in which case she had no business teaching the class.

We are suggesting that something similar tends to go on in discussions of using video in education. Video is often pushed as a research tool in terms of its virtues of being an efficient way of telling a story ("a picture is worth a thousand words") and its utility as a data-recording tool (providing opportunities for multiple coding, slowing down action, etc.). These claims are true, but they leave something out: video can be very pleasurable, both to make and to watch. These need not be guilty pleasures. Why not name and acknowledge them?

We have found that despite protestations of camera shyness, teachers are more likely to agree to participate in a study when it involves the use of video. Video carries a sense of glamour and of immediacy that makes it more attractive as a research method, for both the researcher and researched, than a study based on just observation, questionnaires, or interviewing. Many of the teachers in our studies report not just that they enjoyed being part of a film production, but also that have enjoyed watching the finished video with their students, their colleagues, and their friends and family. On the other hand, rising concerns about video voyeurism on the Internet are making parents more hesitant to give consent for their young children to be videotaped and the fact that the identities of the students and teachers studied cannot be disguised as easily in video ethnographies as they can be in most other forms of research are often raised by university human subjects committees. It is ironic that, in an age when video cameras are increasingly ubiquitous in everyday life, it is increasingly difficult to get institutional approval to use video in educational research.

Shooting and editing videos has given us an opportunity to be artistic, an opportunity lacking in our other professional work. Video editing, like writing, can be tedious, but it also can be very pleasurable, in the way that arts and crafts are pleasurable and writing usually is not, perhaps because it's what we do for a living, but we suspect for other, deeper reasons as well—the written word both as something we create and consume is not as visceral or immediate as something we listen to or watch.

Our use of video as a tool to stimulate reflection and to provoke a questioning of taken-for-granted assumptions carries with it the potential for another kind of pleasure, a pleasure akin to the pleasure of doing well on an intellectual task. We ask a lot of informants in asking them to be videotaped and then to explain their behaviors as cap-

tured in our videos. This process can sometimes produce moments of awkwardness and discomfort, including feelings of "camera shyness," the "tape recorder effect" (being surprised and disappointed to see how one looks and sounds to outsiders—"Is that what I look/sound like?"), to more deeply unsettling feelings of self-critique. But in most cases or even perhaps in every case so far, for teachers in our studies, the experience in the end has been one of self-discovery and learning about others that is not only intellectually and professionally rewarding but also pleasurable, the pleasure coming in the joy of catching a glimpse of oneself in the midst of practice and of getting to relive and ponder fleeting moments from the daily life of the preschool classroom.

When we show a videotape for the first time to a preschool teacher, she tends to be nervous and intense and anxious about both whether the tape portrays her and the children accurately and about how well she will be able to respond to our queries. But when we return to the school to show the re-edited tape to the teacher and her colleagues, there are always smiles and laughter and good-natured teasing. When we show the videotapes to the children, they not only point and laugh but sing along with the video versions of themselves and each other—invariably, at the moment in one of our videos when the teacher leads the class in song, a prelunch prayer, or a counting exercise, the children watching the video sing and chant along, the joy on their faces apparent in performing alongside themselves.

In Shanghai, at the end of a week of visiting and videotaping in a preschool classroom, we held a screening for the children in the class. At the end we asked them if they enjoyed our videotaping. All but one raised their hands. When we asked the one girl who had not raised her hand what she didn't like about the experience she told us, "it was kind of irritating and I wasn't in it enough." Such are the perils and pleasures of our method.

REFERENCES

Asch, T., & Asch, P. (1995). Film in ethnographic research. In P. Hocking (Ed.), *Principles of visual anthropology* (pp. __–__). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Asch, T., Connor, L., & Asch, P. (1983). *Jero on Jero: A Balinese trance séance observed* [Film]. Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources.

Bakhtin, M. (1981). Discourse in the novel (M. Holquist & C. Emerson, Trans.). In M. Holquist (Ed.), *Dialogic imagination: Four essays* (pp. __–__). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays* (V. McGee, Trans.). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. (1990). *Art and answerability* (M Holquist & V. Liapunov, Trans.). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Clifford, J. (1983). On ethnographic authority. *Representations, 1*(2), 118–146.

Connor, L., Asch, T., & Asch, P. (1986). *Jero Tapakan: A Balinese healer.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Fine, M. (1988). Sexuality, schooling, and adolescent females: The missing discourse of desire. *Harvard Educational Review, 58*(1), 29–53.

Mead, M. (1995). Visual anthropology in a discipline of words. In P. Hocking (Ed.), *Principles of visual anthropology* (pp. __–__). New York: Mouton de Gruyter. (Original work published 1972)

Rouch, J. (1995). The camera and the man. In P. Hocking (Ed.), *Principles of visual anthropology* (pp. __–__). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Smith, L. (1973). *Decolonizing methodologies.* London: Zed Books.

Sorenson, E. R., & Jablonko, A. (1995). Research filming of naturally occuring phenomena: Basic strategies. In P. Hocking (Ed.), *Principles of visual anthropology* (pp. __–__). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Tobin, J. (1992). A dialogical approach to fieldsite typicality. *City and Society.*

Tobin, J., & Davidson, D. (1991). Multivocal ethnographies of schools: Empowering vs. textualizing children and teachers. *International Journal of Qualitative Research in Education, 3*(3), 271–283.

Tobin, J., Wu, D., & Davidson, D. (1989). *Preschool in three cultures.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.