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Tracing the vision: A study of community volunteer producers, public access cable television, and empowerment

Higgins, John William, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1994

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1994
To my parents,
Marian and Will,
who have always helped with the tools
and my brother,
Bob,
who helped me learn the meaning of courage
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PUBLICATIONS


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PREFACE

Critical theory and cultural studies emphasize the context which led the researcher to focus on the questions addressed in a body of work. Accordingly, here I will address the major elements which direct my personal interest in this research topic.

In the summer of 1969, I was 17 years old and travelled alone through Mexico, assisted and encouraged by my parents, Will and Marian, and grandmother, Lucille. I attended a language school in Cuernavaca, where I learned Spanish. This school was like none other I had experienced; I noticed an exciting current, a vibrant spirit to the place that I had not witnessed before in an educational setting. There was a concern for individual spiritual growth linked to broader issues of social justice that were quite uplifting to a naive 17 year old North American.

The school was Centro Intercultural de Documentacion (CIDOC), established by education reformer Ivan Illich. Thirteen years later, I discovered I had attended school that summer of 1969 in a place considered the hotbed of critical pedagogy as espoused by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, and liberation theology from the grassroots of the
Catholic Church. These movements focused on life-long education for personal awareness for the purpose of social change, values which I deeply internalized that summer long ago, and which became evident to me only years later. They continue to guide my educational principles and personal values.

In 1973, I was bored with college classes in functionalist approaches to broadcasting, and linked up with other students who had begun to galvanize around a then recently-published book: *Guerrilla Television*. This book has since been appropriately dubbed, "the bible of the alternative video movement." It radicalized our notions of what electronic media might be, and the functions it might serve. We carried these ideas into our professional "careers."

The following year (1974), I began work in commercial radio; commercial broadcast television followed three years later. Throughout my association with commercial broadcasting I maintained my personal sanity and love of grassroots media by volunteering time and energy at community radio station WYSO in Yellow Springs, Ohio. An association with public access cable television grew out of my relationship with community radio; my interest in scholarly research in these areas drew me back to graduate studies.
In 1991 I attended a conference in Cincinnati, Ohio, that attempted to bring together two groups with interests in community media: scholars and practitioners. Between breaks, a friend from the public access sector pulled out a meticulously folded piece of paper and asked me to choose "Pee Wee's Magic Word of the Day." ("Pee Wee's Magic Word" was a feature of a popular children's television program; when the word was mentioned throughout the show, all people and objects went wild.)

I chose a section of the folded paper; it lifted to reveal the word "hegemony." When I chose another, the word "pedagogy" was revealed. We laughed uproariously--the scholarly presentations had been rather stuffy and pretentious, from the practitioner perspective. Nonetheless, the conference was relatively successful in bringing together scholars and practitioners interested in promoting the ideals of grassroots, community-based, democratic media.

This is the context within which I approach this project. This study draws from my experiences as a media practitioner as well as my scholarly training as a professional skeptic. It is my intention that the findings address questions of relevance to both scholars and practitioners alike, to lead us to a better understanding of community-based, grassroots, electronic media.
CHAPTER I
OVERVIEW

The Visions of Public Access

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, two emerging technologies were viewed as having the potential to solve a variety of societal inequities in North American societies. Portable video equipment and large channel capacity cable television were promoted by a variety of disparate social groups in the United States as providing a "voice for the voiceless"—an electronic First Amendment, of sorts. These ideas arose, in part, from experiments with film, video, and social change in Canada.¹

The U.S. visionaries believed that the inequities caused by monopoly-dominated broadcasting might be partially corrected by the establishment of video centers accessible by the public, with related channels on cable television. "Public access," or "community television," was to provide the structure necessary for video training, as well as a distribution system for community-produced programs.

¹ The emergence of public access is reviewed in greater detail in chapter 2. The discussion here is based in particular on the historical overviews provided by Engelman (1990), Fuller (1994), and Gillespie (1975), with contributions from Bednarczyk (1986), and Huie (1987).
Public access was to help address some of the social problems of the period, many of which stemmed in part from a fundamental distrust of centralized social institutions and a widespread belief that people were unable to make a difference in the society. Community television was perceived as an alternative that addressed the monopoly-dominated, profit-driven mainstream media's stranglehold on the electronic exchange of ideas. Public access was to encourage a grassroots "diversity of ideas," where citizens would express their First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech, and the republic would benefit from the open exchange of views.2

This vision of a "diversity of ideas" also involved other utopian visions—in particular, that of individual and group empowerment. In this vision, empowerment meant becoming aware of one's self, others, and society, and, after one had a "voice," actively working to influence society.3.

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3 The concept of empowerment within the public access domain is addressed more fully in chapter 2. The discussion here is drawn primarily from C. Anderson (1975), Bednarczyk (1986), Engelman (1990), Fuller (1994), Gillespie (1975), Rutherford-Crest (1990), Shamberg and Raindance (1971), Walden (1991), and Willener, Milliard, and Ganty (1972).
This empowerment was to take place, in part, through training in video production. Learning to create television programs would demystify the media as individuals became aware of media structure and influence. Participating in the production of television programs would lead to a "media literacy" as individuals learned how to "read" media codes. These production and interpretation skills would not only allow persons to become more discriminating viewers, but would also allow them to actively speak out in the media—exercising their First Amendment liberties, and contributing to an electronic "marketplace of ideas."

These visions of diversity and empowerment through participation in public access cable television were shared by practitioners, academics, and others engaged in discussions of public access. They are visions widely accepted today. However, they are not uncontested. Critiques of the diversity and the empowerment dimensions of the community television philosophy are briefly explored.

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4 The public access concept parallels that of the public library, where materials are housed that are shared by all members of the population. It is worth noting that the public library traditionally houses materials related to print literacy; libraries of late have expanded their collections to include other media. Public access, with its focus on media literacy, continues and expands the tradition of the public library.

Many public access facilities across the United States are located within public libraries; one example is provided by the Allen County Television Center, a part of the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana.
below; some of these critiques are addressed more fully in this study.

Critiques of the Diversity Vision

The diversity vision of public access is questioned primarily on two grounds: (1) it rests on fallacious and naive traditional liberal democratic assumptions; and (2) it privileges the quantity of expression over the quality of ideas.5

Liberal Democratic Assumptions

One problem with the diversity vision is that it rests on the dubious ability of an electronic "marketplace of ideas" to correct societal inequities. The vision is based on liberal democratic ideology and focuses on pluralist assumptions regarding the nature of truth and structures by which truth will emerge, the dichotomy of the individual against society, and the nature of power.

5 These critiques are merely outlined here; they are described more fully in chapter 2.


Critical perspectives regarding pluralist assumptions within community television draw primarily from Bibby, Denford, and Cross (1979), the Council for the Development of Community Media (1983), and Mattelart and Piemme (1980).
A critique of pluralist assumptions—particularly those underlying the freedom of speech guarantees of the First Amendment—argues that there is no one objective "truth," and that even the emergence of multiple "truths" is not necessarily facilitated by the conflict implied within the "clash of ideas." Rather, cooperative structures may expedite a collective discovery and/or construction of "truth."

A related critique addresses liberal democratic assumptions that pit the individual against the collective; these overlook the dialectical nature of the individual and the societal grouping of which he or she is a part.

A final critique of the liberal democratic tradition is that, contrary to naive pluralist ideology regarding the nature of power, power operates covertly, is unequally distributed within society, and does not always work for the common good. As such, a diversity of ideas and/or "personal expression" will do little to address basic societal inequities.

**Freedom of Speech and Public Access**

Other critiques of the diversity vision connect traditional liberal democratic discussions of freedom of speech issues directly with public access. One assessment argues that the diversity vision's traditional focus on community television as a vehicle for personal expression
perpetuates a pluralist myth of individualism mentioned above.

Another critique, originating from within the pluralist framework, says that public access's emphasis on individual expression privileges the quantity of ideas in any context, rather than the quality of ideas raised while discussing public issues, both political and cultural. The critique argues that a diversity of voices does not necessarily equate a diversity of ideas.

**Critiques of the Diversity Vision and This Study**

The critiques described above—liberal democratic assumptions and freedom of speech and public access—are addressed in this study insofar as they relate to the structural critiques of the empowerment vision discussed below.

**Critiques of the Empowerment Vision**

There are five grounds for challenging the empowerment vision of public access: (1) there is little attention paid to definitions and discussions of terms; (2) a causal relationship is implied among media literacy, demystification, and empowerment; (3) the assumptions are untested; (4) there is little attention paid to the procedure by which the vision is to be implemented; and (5) on a macro level, the vision does not address the structural
changes necessary to correct societal inequities. Only a few of these critiques have been selected for inclusion in this study, as discussed below.

Unexplicated Definitions

The public access empowerment vision lacks a depth of discussion as to the definition of terms such as "empowerment," "media literacy," and "media demystification." In addition, there is little discussion of the constituent elements of these terms. This problem will be addressed more fully later in this chapter, as well as in chapter 2.

Causal Relationship

The public access vision of empowerment implies a mechanistic, causal model of the effects of video training.

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6 These critiques are based primarily on Bibby, Denford, and Cross (1979), Council for the Development of Community Media (1983), Garnham (1990), Mattelart and Piemme (1980), Slack (1984), Willener, Milliard, and Ganty (1972), and Williams (1974). I have added my own concern regarding the lack of definition of terms and the implied causal relationship.

7 This is changing somewhat. The January/February 1994 issue of the Community Media Review (formerly Community Television Review) was dedicated to discussions of media literacy. The Alliance for Community Media (ACM, formerly National Federation of Local Cable Programmers) has recently begun promoting the teaching of media literacy as an important function of public access facilities. The name changes reflect metamorphosis and increasing reflectivity within the CTV movement.
In this model, video training leads to media literacy that leads to media demystification that results in empowerment. This model is similar to dated models of communication that suppose media effects; such models do not take into account the context and intent of the persons on the "receiving" end of video training. There very well may be connections between video training, media literacy, media demystification, and empowerment; however, the richness of the interaction between these and other elements speaks to a more interesting and complex exchange than that provided by an effects model. The connections between media literacy, media demystification, and empowerment are the focus of this study and will be explored in depth throughout this project.

Untested Assumptions

Given this causal model, a related drawback to the vision of correcting societal inequities through video training and public access is that the assumptions of empowerment through media literacy and media demystification remain untested. Despite more than two decades during which public access cable television has existed in the United States, extensive research has revealed no studies that have

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8 It is notable that the traditional media education field is also based on an effects model. Media education was seen as a way of "inoculating" viewers against the presumed effects of media, particularly television. This is discussed further in chapter 2.
investigated the question of empowerment through video training. This study directly addresses this lack of empirical research, from the perspective of the community producer.

**Unexplicated Procedures**

Further, there seems to be no real concern given to implementation: critics suggest that for a link to exist between video training and empowerment, it must be forged consciously by the trainer and/or trainee. A discussion of the methods that may encourage empowerment to take place are notably absent from the public access discourse. While this important issue must be addressed at some point by researchers operating within this field, an investigation into the specific procedures by which empowerment may be encouraged is beyond the focus of this dissertation.

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Ancillary aspects of some studies have involved public access volunteer producers; these include the demographic backgrounds of producers (Enos 1979); the reasons volunteers produce programs (White 1988); the use of public access by social movements (Krinsky 1990); producers' intents toward the channel structure, programs, and audience (Hardenbergh 1985); and producer motivations, particularly what producers learned about themselves through public access participation (Fuller 1984).

Related studies include Morrow's (1984) analysis of the ability of public access to change power relationships in the U.S. system.
Absence of Structural Focus

Another critique of the empowerment vision is that, while the correction of societal inequities requires structural changes, the solution through video production training is too technology-driven. This raises serious ideological issues that question the utility of public access and other institutions that are seen to provide only a superficial approach to needed structural change. This discussion is related to the critique of pluralist assumptions mentioned above, and is addressed more fully in chapter 2.

General Focus of This Study

The diversity and empowerment visions of community television are intertwined. For this study, the goals of a diversity of views for personal expression and democratic progress are conceptualized within the larger framework of empowerment, which includes personal enrichment, social awareness, and social activism.

The focus of this study is on the empowerment vision of public access. In particular, the study tests the empowerment vision as it relates to the experiences of community producers.

The critiques of the empowerment vision outlined above suggest the following procedures: (1) define empowerment as it might be approached through media literacy and
demystification; (2) test for evidence that public access training leads to media literacy, and that this literacy results in media demystification and some level of empowerment; and (3) test for evidence of structural change. As discussed later in this chapter, for the purposes of this study, structural change is considered the highest level of empowerment.

The procedures outlined above have defined the general focus of this study. Chapters 1 and 2 investigate and define the key terms "media literacy," "media demystification," and "empowerment." Chapter 3 describes and outlines the methodology utilized in the test for empowerment. Chapters 4 and 5 provide quantitative and qualitative analyses of data, probing the connections between media literacy, demystification, and empowerment. Finally, chapter 6 presents conclusions and a summary of the test for empowerment addressed by this study.

Importance of the Study: An Initial Statement

Despite over two decades of widespread activity by public access volunteers and community producers, channel managers, policy lobbyists, city administrators, and cable operators, little formal research has addressed the questions and concerns of this active practice. The public access movement operates within a framework of public telecommunications policy on the national and local levels,
and is often called upon to provide evidence that public access does provide benefits for citizens—including empowerment and the correction of some societal inequities. This study will help define and determine the validity of some of these claims of public access.

In addition, the view of technology as a panacea for social ills, which permeates aspects of the public access movement, is prevalent today in forecasts related to the National Information Infrastructure (NII), commonly called the "information superhighway." Yesterday's liberating technologies were video and cable television; today's emancipatory technologies are to be the computer and data networks. This study's investigation into the claims of the empowering nature of yesterday's technologies will shed light on the potential of those of tomorrow.¹⁰

This study will also contribute to discussions of media literacy and its relative value in promoting critical viewing, thinking, and action; of the applicability of critical pedagogy theories to adults within a lifelong learning situation; and of First Amendment discussions.

¹⁰ In November/December of 1993, the Alliance for Community Media published an edition of the Community Television Review (since renamed the Community Media Review) entitled "The Community Television Worker's Handbook to Cyberspace." The issue reflects a commitment by the movement to ensure grassroots access to telecommunications technology.
regarding the manner in which diversity is framed in everyday life.

Within media education and critical pedagogy, this study will forward empirical data to what heretofore have been theories supported primarily by anecdotal evidence.

**Informing the Vision**

In review, the public access "literature" makes the following assertions relevant to this study:\footnote{I use the term "literature" loosely. There is by no means a cohesive body of research regarding public access. The term here refers to the extensive review conducted for this study of writings by authors working in academia, government agencies, nonprofit foundations, social activist groups, radical video cooperatives, the arts, and the cable industry. This "literature" is reviewed indepth in chapter 2.}

1. Public access participation allows for the acquisition of media literacy skills, which help to "demystify" the workings of the media.

2. These skills allow the participants to empower themselves through critical awareness and critical action; action includes the exercise of freedom of speech guarantees.

This dissertation will focus on the implementation of a utopian vision of empowerment within public access. As noted previously, public access does not fully explicate its notion of empowerment, nor does the movement advance a
theoretic or procedure by which the ideal of empowerment might be achieved through video production.

However, these aspects are addressed by scholars within the domains of media education and critical pedagogy. Each will be reviewed in turn, in this chapter, only insofar as they serve the research purpose of this dissertation. In the next chapter, each of these areas of literature will be reviewed on its own terms, and in some detail.

**Fleshing out the Vision of Empowerment Through Video**

Two areas of concern arise in making the public access empowerment vision more overt: (1) What is empowerment? and (2) What are the foci of empowerment related to visual literacy and media demystification? The first question is directed primarily by scholars operating within the literature of critical pedagogy, a branch of educational reform that emphasizes the emancipatory aspects of education and lifelong learning. The second question is directed by authors within the literature of media education.\(^\text{12}\)

**Empowerment.** One of the difficulties found in the public access, critical pedagogy, and media education

\[^{12}\text{When using the term {"literature"} throughout this study, I am referring to my selected review of the literatures of critical pedagogy and media education. I am not referring to all of the very extensive works within the entire fields of critical pedagogy and media education.}\]
literatures used in this study is that what constitutes empowerment stands very much in contest. Some literatures indicate that awareness, or cognition, is sufficient for empowerment. Others state that awareness alone is insufficient, and that there must be action that attempts to change the nature of the power relationships in society. Still others take a more intermediary position, suggesting that empowerment has to do with the individual's awareness that he or she can control and move his or her own life, as well as any evidence that the individual attempts to do so, in any arena.

While neither the media education nor the critical pedagogy literatures reviewed for this study directly address definitions of empowerment or consider its constituent elements, a view of empowerment does emerge from work in both fields.

Clearly, it is the critical pedagogy literature that provides the most help in defining and pinpointing what will be defined as empowerment in this dissertation. However, even within this literature there exists enormous contest.

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While educational reform consists of several branches of thought, critical pedagogy refers to scholars focusing on the liberatory aspects of education, and including an analysis of power. There are also several strains of critical movements within critical pedagogy, such as work in feminist pedagogy by Ellsworth (1992) and Gore (1992). I have focused on critical pedagogists most influential on my topic area; major theorists here include Freire (1970a, 1970b, 1973, 1985, 1993), Giroux (1981, 1988, 1992), and McLaren (1986, 1988, 1989).
The debate essentially revolves around the issue of where empowerment begins or ends, and addresses whether empowerment can involve merely awareness or must proceed to personal life action or to societal action as well. All sources agree that empowerment involves some kind of cognitive action, although this is sometimes described as self-awareness, or reflection.14

The work of Paulo Freire forms a foundation for literature in the critical pedagogy field. Freire's primary concern was to help oppressed peoples achieve "praxis"—a critical awareness he defines as based on self-reflection and linked with action to transform the social world. Many contemporary critical pedagogists, while basing their work on Freire, seem to have allowed the stringent criterion of societal action to recede from their purview. Instead, these authors tend to emphasize only the critical awareness aspect of empowerment; awareness may or may not then translate into some sort of personal or social action.15

14 For examples of literature that focuses primarily on awareness as cognition, see Halloran and Jones (1984), and Neuman (1991). For examples of literature that posits awareness as cognition and self-reflection, see works by Giroux; see also McLaren. For a more stringent definition of awareness linked with action, see Freire's works.

15 Giroux is a primary source for this review of contemporary critical pedagogy, as is McLaren. These are considered to be the major spokespersons for this viewpoint.
However, these critical pedagogists are closer to Freire's concept of critical awareness. Freire's critical awareness is not merely cognition, nor is it limited to learning for learning's sake. Instead, critical awareness is reflection on one's place in societal arrangements, with a distinction between the action of reflection and the action of cognition.

This study will utilize both constructions of awareness: that of mere cognition, and the more complex reflection. The former is directed primarily by the media education literature discussed below; the latter is guided primarily by Freire as well as other critical pedagogists such as Giroux and McLaren.

Freire's concept of action is considered primarily within the societal realm, and not directly focused on action in the personal arena; however, the aspect of self-reflectivity does imply some personal orientation—toward oneself and toward others. In contrast, the action required by the less stringent critical pedagogists is primarily within the realm of awareness, requiring little or no action within the personal or societal arenas.

A portion of the dissimilarity between the approaches to critical pedagogy issues may be related to context. Freire's emphasis was on adult learners outside the education system, while the majority of contemporary authors
in critical pedagogy are working primarily within the context of university and secondary school education.

Further complicating the discussion of empowerment as it regards this study, critical pedagogy does not consider empowerment within the context of media production. However, the media education literature does specifically connect critical pedagogical concepts with video and audio production.

**Foci of Video Empowerment.** Many of the ideas within the media education literature are related to traditional education reform movements—areas related to critical pedagogy, but absent the emancipatory aspects advanced by critical pedagogists. Traditional media education tends to avoid the discussions of power, ideology, and representation found in the more contemporary critical media education. This emerging critical media education draws from critical pedagogy, but its connection is with the less stringent of the contemporary critical pedagogists. Both schools of media education tend to be oriented toward institutional education.¹⁶

The selected literature within traditional and critical media education tends toward a view of empowerment that is

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¹⁶ However, this emphasis is shifting, as is that of critical pedagogy, away from an institutional perspective and toward a broader interpretation of pedagogy and media education. This is further discussed in chapter 2.
narrower than most found within critical pedagogy. Media education tends to consider empowerment primarily as awareness, and awareness almost exclusively as cognition. The literature assumes that cognition is empowerment, and is facilitated by media production, which can then lead to personal and/or societal action. Within the literature, the domain of focus for empowerment is often truncated in terms of pertaining solely to media and media structure, impact, production techniques, and the symbolic logic underpinning production canon.

Regarding these concerns, the media education literature--both traditional and critical--is enormously rich in detailing the foci of attention for empowerment within a production context. In particular, media education helps delineate the constituent elements of media literacy and media demystification related to this rather narrow consideration of empowerment.17

The media education literature shares a measure of the public access vision of a technological utopia, defines a more narrow concept of empowerment as cognition (and sometimes reflection) than that found in the critical pedagogy literature, and addresses teaching and training methods by which media production might lead to empowerment.

The traditional media education literature, particularly in its initial stages in the 1960s and 1970s, is inclined to be more atheoretical than theoretical when approaching media literacy and media demystification. Traditional media education tends toward lists of component items that might constitute media encoding or decoding skills; there are relatively few works that take a conceptual organizing focus and try to organize these lists to higher levels of abstraction.16

It is the emergent critical media education literature that provides self-reflectiveness and more sophisticated analyses.19 Taken as a whole, media education tends to be a tumultuous body of literature; it is a literature in flux.

For the purposes of this study, both approaches to media education provide ingredients by which the public access vision of empowerment through media literacy and media demystification might be evaluated. The overall media education literature provides dimensions of attention that are important to consider for a test of the public access vision.

16 A notable exception is provided by Halloran and Jones (1984).

19 Critical works by Sholle and Denski (1993, 1994) have attempted to organize traditional and critical approaches to media education; they also provide a conceptual focus for a media-related pedagogy.
In particular, the media education literature emphasizes (1) the elements of video production canon, including the techniques by which programs are constructed; (2) the symbolic logic of that canon, including values implemented when the canon is used, and media impact; (3) media organization, including the structure and operation of media organizations on both a macro (e.g., network television) and a micro (e.g., production team) level; and (4) social, political, and economic spheres and their interrelationships with the mass media.

Accordingly, the media education literature attends to the cognitive aspects of media literacy and media demystification as well as to the production aspects of empowerment, which takes these awarenesses procedurally into production.

The Road Map

The above discussion frames the literatures of public access, critical pedagogy, and media education as they relate to the public access vision of empowerment. The public access movement shares with media education and critical pedagogy claims to empowerment through, among other things, video training. Together, these three fields make it possible to flesh out the vision of public access and subsequently evaluate the implementation of this vision.
Within this context, the public access literature provides a broad vision of empowerment through media production training. In so doing, the literature might be viewed as providing destination points on a larger "road map." The vision road map is characterized by the following formula:

media literacy ---> media demystification = empowerment (awareness of self, others, and society; action to change relationships in these areas)

The media education literature provides elements that direct the implementation of the public access vision. Thus, the literature provides specific directions to connecting the points on the public access "map."

The critical pedagogy literature provides depth to concepts raised by both the public access and media education literatures. It also provides an indication of the method of inquiry to pursue. Accordingly, critical pedagogy contributes a rationale behind the map itself, a refinement of the directions connecting the points on the map, and the key—or rule book—required to read the map. The methodological aspects of this rule book will be considered in chapter 3.

For the purposes of this study, the "map" to be utilized is a chart consisting of the related dimensions of empowerment and foci within a video production context.
The Video Empowerment Chart

The intersection of the relevant elements of the media education and critical pedagogy literatures as discussed above results in the video empowerment chart, which provides a grid for organizing these literatures (see Figure 1).

In addition, this chart provides a framework from which to evaluate data collected during this study in order to qualify as a test of empowerment, as discussed in chapter 3.

The chart lays out the spheres of empowerment and the ingredients of cognition, reflection, and action within these realms. It also lays out the dimensions of attention that will allow a test of the public access vision, and thus becomes a guiding focus for this dissertation.

The Empowerment Domain

On the chart, the horizontal axis addresses the areas within which empowerment takes place, as directed by the critical pedagogy and media education literatures. These include the production, personal, and societal spheres.

Production is related to the construction of video programs. It is a narrow category, focusing on discussion of programs or program genres.

Personal relates to one's own life or to relationships with one's close "others," or more distant "others"--including persons on the production crew, workmates, etc.

Societal refers to power arrangements of the societal sphere, but outside the production and personal spheres. This includes social and media systems--beyond the narrow "production" category.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREAS OF FOCUS</th>
<th>PRODUCTION</th>
<th>EMPOWERMENT DOMAIN</th>
<th>SOCIETAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAMON OF PROD (program construction; codes; code symbolism; impact of values on audience)</td>
<td>C/R</td>
<td>C/R</td>
<td>C/R</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEDIA ORGANIZATION (ownership/structure/operations/program development &amp; distrib.)</td>
<td>C/R</td>
<td>C/R</td>
<td>C/R</td>
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<tr>
<td>NON-MEDIA INSTITUTION RELATIONSHIPS (political/social/economic/media-institution influence)</td>
<td>C/R</td>
<td>C/R</td>
<td>C/R</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHERS (others: general; audience)</td>
<td>C/R</td>
<td>C/R</td>
<td>C/R</td>
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<tr>
<td>SELF &amp; SELF LIFE (self; &quot;close others&quot;; representation)</td>
<td>C/R</td>
<td>C/R</td>
<td>C/R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: C/R = Cognitive/Reflective awareness in the cell  
A = Action in the cell

**Figure 1:**

The Video Empowerment Chart
"Power relationships" refers to a critical definition of power, which includes challenging/questioning social and media systems. The societal domain is closest to the Freirean concepts of reflection and action.

The horizontal axis provides the domains of empowerment as extrapolated from the critical pedagogy literature: personal and societal spheres. The media education literature directs the inclusion of the realm of production when investigating empowerment within a video production context.

**The Areas of Focus**

The vertical axis of the chart provides the foci of attention through video production within which empowerment may take place. As indicated by the media education literature, these foci include the canon of production; media organization; nonmedia institutional relationships; and others. The critical pedagogy literature directs the inclusion of the focus of self and self life.

**Canon of Production** includes the creation of on-screen materials: traditional or alternative rules regarding production, audio, lighting, camera angles and movement, visual composition, scripting, budgeting, acting, juxtaposition of images, graphics, special effects, technical reception, equipment, and other production elements.

The canon also encompasses the codes through which meaning is conveyed symbolically within the televisual medium. Included are the values represented in the production canon, as well as possible effects of these represented values expressed as media impact on audiences. This area of focus includes alternatives to the production canon, as well as the canon values.
Included as well are program genres and topics, program diversity, and the criteria by which to evaluate programs.

**Media Organization** encompasses the structure and ownership of media organizations, program distribution systems, and the organizational structure of the production group. This encompasses alternative structure, ownership, distribution, and production group organizational alternatives.

Specifically, this area of focus encompasses media policies of public access or mainstream media in general, including interior politics and policies within the public access facility and exterior politics of the public access facility with the cable operator. Also included are the division of labor within the production team and the scheduling of members of the production group.

**Nonmedia Institutional Relationships** refers to social, political, and economic systems and/or institutions. This includes the impact of these systems and institutions on the media (i.e., advertising, program content, etc.), as well as the influence of the media on these systems and institutions (society). This category embraces alternatives to traditional relationships.

Specifically, this area of focus encompasses national and local politics, including relationships between the public access facility and the city, as well as between the city and the cable operator. This is a larger sphere than media organization, and includes values related to the First Amendment and freedom of speech guarantees.

**Others** refers to persons outside the immediate personal life of the community producer. While focusing particularly on the audience for the producer's program, this area also includes the crew involved in the production, persons appearing in the programs, and workmates.

This area also refers to the image others have of the producer and the general sense of the "community" outside the producer's immediate personal life.

**Self and Self Life** focuses on one's personal world, as well as the roles close others—such as friends and family members—play in that world. This encompasses the image one has of one's self and close others; and own media image.

This area includes utilization of access for specifically personal goals.
As directed by the media education literature, the focus of canon of production is related primarily to elements of media literacy, which focuses on the ability to break on-screen productions into component elements, evaluate them, and thereby disrupt the "seamless," "natural" sense of television programs.

The foci of media organization and nonmedia institutional relationships are associated primarily with elements of media demystification, which focuses on the ability to recognize and evaluate the complex systems and relationships involved in the creation and distribution of media products, and their connection with broader societal issues.

The foci of others, and self and self life are based on the media education and critical pedagogy literatures. The former focus emphasizes a general "other," primarily in the role of audience; the latter focus is associated with one's self and close others, including one's personal context and media image.

Cognition/Reflection and Action

The intersection of the horizontal axis of the domain of empowerment, and the vertical axis of the areas of focus provides the 15 internal cells illustrated in the video empowerment chart in Figure 1. Each cell is separated into two subcells, allowing for the distinction between awareness
as cognition and/or reflection (C/R), and action (A) within the empowerment domain as directed by the critical pedagogy and media education literatures.

**Cognition/Reflection** refers to simple awareness in a given area of focus within the particular empowerment domain; this awareness may also include (but not necessarily) self-reflection.

**Action** addresses specific behavior that implements the area of focus within the particular empowerment domain (past or present).

Thus, within each realm of production, personal, and societal, empowerment manifests itself as cognition/reflection and/or action. For the purposes of this study, cognition/reflection and action refer to awarenesses and/or actions that are results of access participation.

Figure 2 defines andsynopsizes the elements of the video empowerment chart and illustrates the manner in which the chart will interact with the study data. The figure includes definitional terms related to the empowerment domains and areas of focus; cells and subcells resulting from the intersection of the empowerment domain and the areas of focus are also defined.

**The Video Empowerment Charts: Summary**

The spheres, elements, and foci of empowerment as approached through media literacy and media demystification are delineated in Figures 1 and 2. These components are
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Key: A: Independent Indicate
C: Independent Indicate

Chart Definitions

Figure 2: Chart Definitions
derived from the literatures of media education and critical pedagogy.

Like the "road map" of the public access vision, the chart requires a key to provide the interpretive context and methodology for application. Such a key is furnished by the critical pedagogy literature and is discussed in chapter 3.

**Research Statement**

Based on the above, this dissertation is a qualitative study, testing the public access vision of empowerment as it pertains to the community producer by applying the criteria described in the video empowerment chart. This chart is informed by contributions from the public access, critical pedagogy, and media education literatures.

This study investigates the assumption that empowerment, as defined by the chart, is possible through video production training. The site of focus is an applied setting outside the context of institutional education: the public access arena. The conduct of the study is set forth in chapter 3.

Specifically, the purpose of this study is to test the public access vision of empowerment as explicated in the video empowerment chart: to see (1) if producers of public access programs have an awareness of the media's structure and operation, including a sense of the codes of television;
(2) if this awareness of media's structure, operation, and codes assists producers in defining a sense of self, others, and society; (3) if producers take action to implement these awarenesses; and (4) if producers identify and change relationships, particularly within the societal realm.

Thus, this dissertation becomes a test of the implementation of the public access vision. It is the assumption of this study that a test of this implementation provides a method of testing the viability of the vision itself.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

As outlined in chapter 1, this study investigates the public access vision of empowerment through video training. This chapter will detail the specifics of the vision of empowerment through selected literatures, critiques of this vision, and pluralist assumptions of diversity related to the empowerment vision.

This study is informed primarily by three streams of literature: (1) public access, or community television, (2) critical pedagogy, and (3) media education. Ancillary to these is literature from within First Amendment theory.

First, the community television literature particularly focuses on public access cable television in the United States. Assumptions of empowerment from media literacy, media demystification, and video production arise from this literature base, as do assumptions of diversity.

Second, theoretic discussions of empowerment arise from the critical pedagogy literature—an area that presumes empowerment ensues from lifelong learning that is connected to a greater awareness of society’s workings. Critical pedagogy also brings to this study theories of pedagogy that
will better inform methods that may encourage empowerment and development of media literacy. Finally, the literature informs the nature of the methodology to be used for this investigation, as discussed in chapter 3.

Third, the media education literature directs the specifics by which empowerment within a video production context might be exhibited. This area traditionally focuses on an understanding of media operations primarily by decoding media practices. For the purposes of this study, particular emphasis will be placed on literature that concentrates on video and audio production as a means of understanding media codes through emphasis on encoding programs, as well as critical perspectives that argue against the separation of encoding/decoding functions.

The related public access ideal of diversity directs that, in addition to these primary bases of literature, the study draw upon scholars of the First Amendment. These First Amendment scholars will provide a framework to examine the pluralist ideals associated with freedom of speech guarantees within the empowerment vision.

Thus, this chapter provides an historical background to the practice of public access cable television; an analysis and critique of the utopian promise underlying community television; an investigation of media literacy, demystification, and critical awareness/critical action as they arise from the access literature; an examination of the
major themes of critical pedagogy; a discussion of predominant issues within media education; and an analysis and critique of the liberal democratic assumptions underlying the empowerment vision.

**Background**

**Overview**

In the United States, the production and transmission of mainstream television programs to mass audiences is highly centralized. Over-the-air broadcast television consists of five major commercial and public networks: NBC, CBS, ABC, Fox, and PBS; these networks reach American homes through affiliated local broadcast stations.

These local stations, and their national broadcast network programs, are picked up by local cable systems and retransmitted to cable television subscribers. Cable television also offer subscribers a host of other national programming through cable networks such as ESPN, MTV, CNN, and C-Span.

All of these program providers—commercial and public, broadcast or cablecast—share commonalities: a professional code that favors "slick" production values; an emphasis on style, often at the expense of meaningful content; a conceptualization of the audience as "mass"; and a vertical communication model that is transmission-reception in nature, where programs are produced and distributed by
professionals at the top and received by audiences (or often, "consumers") at the bottom.

In many localities, municipalities require that cable systems also provide an alternative program source that attempts to challenge many of the above assumptions of "professional" program providers: public access, or community television. A discussion of the evolution of these channels follows.

In the United States, municipalities and local cable television companies negotiate contracts, or franchises, that permit the cable company to operate a virtual monopoly on cable service within a given jurisdiction. The franchises exist in part because the cable television wires utilize the public right-of-way within the municipalities. These procedures are allowed by federal law, as are policies established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the governmental agency regulating telecommunications in the United States.

The franchise agreement often requires that the local cable system pay to the municipality a percentage of revenues from subscriber fees. The cable operator often agrees to other conditions, such as wiring all schools for cable television at no cost or providing city government offices with two-way interactive video and data networks for in-house communication.
Many municipalities require an additional service: channels set aside on the local cable television system for use by the general public. These public access channels are based on the concept that the public has a First Amendment right of access to the electronic media. Equipment is made available for the public to produce their own programs, to be cablecast at little or no charge. This allows the public an electronic soapbox of sorts to serve a geographic area wired for cable television. Today, nearly 2,000 communities in the United States possess cable access channels. Dedicated for use by the public, or set aside for government or education, these channels produce over 15,000 hours of original programming each week (Ingraham 1991).

Funding for the access facilities equipment comes primarily from the local cable television system operator; the funds are usually channeled through the city government.

Roots in Social Change Experiments

Contemporary U.S. public access television is generally recognized to have its roots in the National Film Board of Canada's "Challenge for Change" program in the late 1960s (Bednarczyk 1986; Buske 1986; Engelman 1990; Fuller 1994; Gillespie 1975; Huie 1987; Stoney 1986, 1989). This Canadian project began as part of a governmental interagency "war on poverty." Film and portable video, considered communication tools by which communities could organize and
mobilize themselves, were utilized as catalysts for social change (Gillespie 1975; Hopkins et al. 1973; Mitchell 1974; Rosen and Herman 1977; and Spiller [1983]).

U.S. public access was also influenced by social and media activists, video artists, and the "counterculture" of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Arlen, qtd. in Bednarczyk 1986, 24; Buske 1986; Engelman 1990; Gillespie 1975). These activists were excited by the potential uses of lightweight, portable video equipment that became available in the United States in the late 1960s, and the possibilities of alternative program distribution via the emerging technology of cable television. The United States' history of independent, alternative video—for the purposes of social activism and video as an art form—have been traced by Armstrong (1981); Boddy (1990); Boyle (1989; 1990); Davis and Simmons (1977); Mellencamp (1988); Price (1977); Schneider and Korot (1976); and Youngblood (1970). In particular, Guerrilla Television, by Michael Shamberg and the Raindance media collective (1971), is considered to embody the philosophy of the video movement of this period (Boddy 1990; Boyle 1989; Engelman 1990; Gillespie 1975).

Downing (1990) notes that contemporary alternative media movements continue a tradition of radical political activity he traces from the mid-18th century. Among these is the community radio movement, which has been active in
the United States since the late 1940s and is a precursor to the community television movement.¹

This historical summary serves to contextualize contemporary concepts of public access to the electronic media. Groups active today in the public access movement—such as the video collective Paper Tiger Television, or the Alliance for Community Media (ACM)²—continue in the tradition of the alternative media movement. The sources mentioned above detail a rich history of active resistance to the domination of the mainstream broadcast television outlets, and the beginnings of what has become an established alternative distribution system—primarily

¹ Community radio shares many of the ideals of public access television; however, there are significant differences between the two regarding structure, operations, funding, and ideology. These differences are not insurmountable; for example, the Grand Rapids Community Media Center (GRCMC) in Michigan operates a community radio station as well as a public access cable television channel, an interactive educational access channel, a community film and video archives, and a computer FreeNet with access to the Internet.

Further discussion of U.S. community radio is provided by Downing (1984). Armstrong (1981) and Barlow (1988) also include information regarding the coordinating organization, the National Federation of Community Broadcasters. In particular, Lorenzo Milam (1975) is considered the "Johnny Appleseed" of U.S. community radio; his Sex and Broadcasting is a classic in community radio circles.

Discussion of international community radio is provided by Downing (1984) and Lewis (1984; 1993). Girard (1992) also includes information regarding the organization, the World Federation of Community-Oriented Radio Broadcasters (known by its French acronym, AMARC).

² The ACM was formerly called the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers (NFLCP). The name was changed in 1992. With a few exceptions, I will refer to both as the ACM.
through cable television. The philosophies behind today’s public access movement continue the ideals of the Challenge for Change program and the early social/media activists.³

In particular, the concept that video can be used in such a manner as to empower people and communities is directly tied to these movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s. This belief continues to permeate contemporary public access philosophy. An analysis of this concept of empowerment as it is said to occur both through the acquisition of media literacy skills through media education and the demystification of the media forms the basis of this study.

Institutionalized Community Television in the United States

Community television in the United States has been institutionalized primarily through the ACM. As an organizing and lobbying force and an information source, ACM

³ While the focus of this study is on public access within the United States, other experiences with community television inform this study. In addition to the Canadian experiences cited above, other international uses of alternative video are discussed by Berrigan (1977), Dowmunt (1993), and Lewis (1993). Thede and Ambrosi (1991) also include information regarding Videazimut, an international organization focusing on community video.

Bibby, Denford, and Cross (1979); the Council for the Development of Community Media (1983); Mattelart and Mattelart (1982); and Mattelart and Piemme (1980) provide critiques of community television ideals based on experiences outside the United States. These ideals are shared by access advocates within the United States and are directly applicable to this study.
has been at the center of public access activities since its inception in 1976 as the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers (NFLCP).

The ACM grew out of local programming experiments at local cable systems in the United States in the early 1970s. These projects were initiated by longtime access advocate George Stoney at New York University's Alternate Media Center. Stoney had been involved in the National Film Board of Canada's Challenge for Change program.

These experiments in local cable access were aided in 1972 when the FCC mandated that cable systems carry public, educational, and governmental access channels. The U.S. Supreme Court declared these access requirements unconstitutional on a federal level in 1979. However, local communities were allowed to require the channels to be provided by the local cable system, and by the late 1970s the concept of public access to cable television channels had been successfully established across the United States (Engelman 1990; Fuller 1994; Janes 1987). During discussion of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984, Congress commended the First Amendment ideals behind public access and allowed local communities to continue to request the channels when regulating cable systems.4

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4 The Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992, which revised the 1984 Act, addresses some aspects of public access. However, the 1992 Act primarily targets rates for cable television service. (continued...)
Review of the Literature: Public Access

The writings from various arenas addressing public access can hardly be termed a "literature," since this assumes a coherent body of work. Rather, the term here refers to the review of the works written by authors operating in various (and often overlapping) fields: academics, government agencies, nonprofit foundations, think tanks, social activist groups, radical video collectives, community television practitioners, and the cable television industry.

The public access literature will be reviewed according to its application toward the vision of empowerment or the related ideal of diversity. The empowerment vision is explored first; the ideals of diversity are discussed later in this chapter.

For this study, the public access literature has been separated into two categories: those of practitioner (those using the medium: participants in community television, members of video collectives, video artists, etc.) and nonpractitioner (those not using the medium: academics, persons engaged in policy studies, etc.). This separation is intended to contrast the self-image and philosophies held

4(...continued)

S.2195, "The National Public Telecommunications Infrastructure Act of 1994," was recently introduced in the Senate. The bill contains provisions for channel space and funding that extends the notion of public access to all telecommunications networks.
by those working within the community television movement with the analysis provided by those outside public access.

This distinction between practitioner and nonpractitioner is more relevant to the early days of community television, when practitioners provided more action, and nonpractitioners, who were involved with public access on an ancillary basis, contributed more reflection. As the public access movement has matured, it has adopted a more critical stance and has begun to question many of its basic precepts.5

The Utopian Promise of Public Access

An unlikely coalition of groups from business, academics, government, and social activist organizations joined forces in the late 1960s and early 1970s to promote cable television and public access (Schmidt 1976; Streeter 1987). Streeter notes that these groups shared a sense of the utopian promise of the new technology of portable video linked with the emerging distribution system of cable television. This shared vision allowed normally disparate

5 Indeed, since work began on this study in 1991, a noticeable shift has occurred within the public access movement. Annual national conferences have begun to include the presentation of philosophical and theoretical "white papers"; the pages of ACM's Community Media Review have reflected a similar transformation. Within the movement, a strong self-reflective perspective has emerged, questioning long-held tenets of CTV ideology.
groups to ignore their differences and work toward a common future:

Cable . . . had the potential to rehumanize a dehumanized society, to eliminate the existing bureaucratic restrictions of government regulation common to the industrial world, and to empower the currently powerless public. (1987, 181)

The utopian aspects of the video and access movement are discussed within the community television literature by practitioners and nonpractitioners alike, including Armstrong (1981); Berrigan (1979); Braderman (1991); Council for the Development of Community Media (1983); Kalba (1977); Mellencamp (1988); and Price and Wicklein (1972). The utopian vision and language of the late 1960s and early 1970s are exemplified particularly by Willener, Milliard, and Ganty when describing video experiments in Europe in Videology and Utopia: Explorations in a New Medium:

We shall . . . try to abstract from our videological praxis the basic conceptual, schematic, and sociological framework that this field seems to us to need, at the same time revealing, through the articulation of the process, the potential for transformation that can be liberated by video. (1972, 113)

They further state that "at a given moment video becomes the medium for achieving liberation from subjection to TV; it ends by encompassing TV in a combined praxis that is wider and more complex" (132). "If we assert that a potential for emancipation exists in a particular video praxis, it is because it is increasingly possible to verify it" (138).
These ideals related to the liberatory potential of video were revolutionary within the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s that focused on the enslaving aspects of the technology. Smith acclaims the radical "video visionaries" of this period who adopted video technology instead of rejecting it—thereby risking the wrath of others in the counterculture—so that they might create "a voice for the voiceless" (1981, 26).

The language within current public access literature still reflects the utopian vision of "empowering the disenfranchised" ("Alternative Views" 1989). The movement still expresses the belief that "an important transition is felt to be made when citizens become shapers (not merely consumers) of messages. A critical media awareness is generated" (Stoney 1989, 283).

The above are presented as reflections of the broad utopian promise of video and public access cable. This study focuses on one aspect of this utopian promise: the vision of empowerment. Before addressing this vision specifically, the broader utopian promise deserves further scrutiny.

Critique of the Utopian Promise

Given that the purpose of this dissertation is to investigate whether or not empowerment through media literacy and demystification takes place within the public
access experience, it is appropriate to place the utopian promise of access in perspective.

Devine summarizes the progressive critique of public access as focusing on "amateurish," "unprofessional" programming; limited distribution to small audiences; and a naive belief in the inherent liberating aspects of video and public access cable (1992b, 6-7). It is this last argument that is heard most often during discussions of empowerment through public access technical training. The movement's focus on the intrinsic emancipatory facets of video reveals its foundations in technological utopianism.

Slack notes that what she terms the "alternative technology movement" is closely tied to the counterculture of the late 1960s and

focuses on the integral relationship between technologies and social organization, structure, and values. A critique of technologies necessarily involves a critique of the society that uses them. The critique remains inadequate, however, due to the movement's fascination with technology, a fascination that tends to cloud the ability to comprehend the full range of complexity operative in the relationship between technology and society. This fascination is an only thinly veiled commitment to the equation of technological growth and social progress. (1984, 38)

Williams posits a "symptomatic technology" position, where "television, like any other technology, becomes available as an element or a medium in a process of change that is in any case occurring or about to occur" (1974, 13). "If television had not been invented, this argument runs, we
would still be manipulated or mindlessly entertained, but in some other way and perhaps less powerfully" (12). The weakness with this position, he notes, is that it separates technology from society, rather than seeing technology as the result of the intention of certain interests within the society.

A failure on the part of technological utopians to look beyond the immediate technology to the societal structures within which that technology operates is at the heart of Williams's and Slack's critiques. This view is shared by Bibby, Denford, and Cross (1979); Council for the Development of Community Media (1983); Garnham (1990); Mattelart and Mattelart (1982); Mattelart and Piemme (1980); and Willener, Milliard, and Ganty (1972). Enzensberger reflects the general opinion when he asserts:

Anyone who expects to be emancipated by technological hardware, or by a system of hardware however structured, is the victim of an obscure belief in progress. Anyone who imagines that freedom for the media will be established if only everyone is busy transmitting and receiving is the dupe of a liberalism which, decked out in contemporary colors, merely peddles the faded concepts of a preordained harmony of social interests. (1970/1988, 34)

According to these critiques of the utopian promise of community television and technology, without the broader perspective of technology within societal structures, the "symptomatic technology" or the "alternative technology" movement is easily co-opted by contributing "to the health of just that system of corporate domination that it
initially reacted against" (Slack 1984, 36). Garnham asserts that the "myths of video"—including claims of demystification, democratization, and a "process" rather than "product" orientation—are propagated by dominant economic and social forces attempting to market consumer video equipment (1990, 68).⁶

Blau applies the critique of technological utopianism directly to the public access movement:

We should thus be deeply skeptical about any claims that access is inherently democratizing. Such claims are made through the narcotic haze of technological utopianism that was widespread at the time when access first appeared in cable franchises. (1992b, 23)

Utopian dreams of liberation through technology are not unique to the alternative video movement. Barnouw notes similar utopian visions in the introduction of other media technologies:

It should be remembered that every step in modern media history—telephone, phonograph, motion picture, radio, television, satellite—stirred similar euphoric predictions. All were expected to usher in an age of enlightenment. All were seen as fulfilling the promise of democracy. Possible benefits were always easier to envisage than misuses and corruptions, and still are. (1978, 176)⁷

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⁶ For a response to Garnham's critique of video, see Devine (1992b).

⁷ Barnouw's observation also applies to computers and the rhetoric surrounding the utopian promise of the National Information Infrastructure (NII), or "information superhighway." For an outline of the NII initiative, see Huth and Gould (1993).
This critique of technological utopianism allows us to place the romantic vision of the public access movement in a larger theoretical context. Within this framework it is conceivable that some of the long-standing canons of the movement might not yield the results community television advocates claim. A summary of some of these tenets, as they relate to this study, follows.

Public Access Assumptions of Empowerment

Public access cable television in the United States operates under the assumption that positive results will accompany both the watching and the making of public access television programs. This dissertation will focus on the process of making programs, which the access literature asserts empowers the access producer or groups of volunteers working collectively.

In particular, the literature has been categorized in this study to reflect three aspects of this empowerment: (1) acquisition of media literacy skills, related to a (2) demystification of the media, and aiding in the process of (3) critical awareness/critical action (consciousness-raising). The related issues of pluralist assumptions regarding freedom of speech aspects of empowerment will be dealt with separately later in this chapter.
Acquisition of Media Literacy Skills. The public access literature posits that, as the producer/viewer becomes more aware of the manipulation and juxtaposition of images for intended effect, the producer/viewer is better able to decode the subtle framings of the media toward an issue. Rather than viewing television as a slice of reality, programs are seen as perspectives reflecting the values and objectives of producers and associated institutions. In this manner, the seemingly "seamless" nature of the television reality is shattered.

Access practitioners discussing media literacy from this perspective include Forbes and Layng (1978); Hobbs (1994); Institute of Lifetime Learning (1986); Johnson (1986; 1990); Koning (1986); Oringel and Buske (1986); and Stein (1991). Related discussions of media and visual literacy and their relationship to community video are provided by C. Anderson (1975); Church (1987); Freebairn (1977); Lemisch (1986); Mattelart and Mattelart (1982); Mattelart and Piemme (1980); Willener, Milliard, and Ganty (1972); and Youngblood (1970). Johnson illustrates the practitioner perspective:

In today's information environment, media literacy is essential to the critical thinking of a well-educated individual. Media literacy is only possible if a person knows how to create, as well as watch, audio-visual communication. Cable is the only institution that provides the opportunity to create that communication in a non-discriminatory way. By giving people an opportunity to actively make television, cable access fosters the kind of media literacy
necessary to living and thinking critically in a media-saturated environment. (1986, 35)

Until recently, academics did not connect media literacy with public access in the United States to a significant degree. However, Mattelart and Piemme (1980) note the ideological implications of training in image "grammar" during community video experiments in Europe in the 1970s. In a discussion of the use of decentralized, portable television in Mozambique in the 1970s, Mattelart and Mattelart (1982) note the potential of using the equipment to promote training in "image literacy." The authors posit that such training seeks to "teach the population the language of the image" (78) and must consider the community context in which such training occurs.

The January/February 1994 issue of the ACM publication, the Community Media Review, reflects a recent surge of interest in media literacy as a teaching goal for public access facilities. The movement is examining practices and exploring key concepts within the notion of media literacy, such as those provided by Hobbs (1994) and Johnson (1994). At the same time, the edition also reflects utopian ideals related to community television and media literacy:

In this country, our ability to exercise power—personally and politically—is inexorably linked to our experiences with media, particularly television. Media literacy—the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and produce communication in a variety of forms—is all about power. The power that comes from understanding who controls media systems and why. The power that comes from learning how media messages are
put together. The power that comes from taking media tools into our own hands to communicate, to create meaning, and to counter the corporate culture with its insistence on endless consumption.

Media literacy is fundamental to the survival of democracy in the information age. Without media literacy, it is unlikely that we will fully exercise our power to envision alternatives, re-build our sense of community, organize politically or reclaim our civic life. In this issue of CMR we explore the promise--and the challenges--of working toward a media literate society, and we consider the important role of community media centers and practitioners have in carrying this work forward. (Manly and Reidy 1994, 3; emphasis in original)

The passage above demonstrates how media literacy—which had been seen as a desirable side effect of video training—is now emerging as a highly touted educational goal of public access. Indeed, it is being constructed as vital to the survival of democracy itself, thus reinforcing the need to investigate the pluralist assumptions of diversity (discussed later in this chapter).

Demystification of the Media’s Operation. Within the public access literature, media literacy and demystification are seen as two nearly inseparable outcomes of technical training: literacy leads to demystifying the workings of the media in the mind of the producer/viewer. Closer scrutiny of the concept reveals that this demystification takes place on two levels: the level of representation through images, and the structural and functional level.
The critique of community television in Great Britain in the 1970s provided by Bibby, Denford, and Cross summarizes primarily the representational demystification tenets of the access movement:

Some of the original objectives of [community access channels], to demystify television and transform passive consumption into active involvement in the media, are valid. Gaining skills in the use of a medium gives users a means of communicating their views and a language in which they can analyse their position in the world. Using a medium yourself can make you more critical of other representations made in that medium; and as television is a predominant medium in our society, increasing awareness of how it functions, and how its messages are constructed, can be a progressive aim. The critical question is how this is achieved. (1979, 54)

Representational demystification, as illustrated above, will be conceptualized within discussions of media literacy, with its attention primarily to images and their interpretation.

This study will focus on demystification as it refers to discussions regarding the structures and functions of the media. The manifesto of the contemporary radical video collective Paper Tiger Television in New York is illustrative of the connection made by practitioners between community television and structural demystification:

Paper Tiger Television is a public access TV show. It looks at the communications industry via the media in all of their forms.

The power of mass culture rests on the trust of the public. This legitimacy is a paper tiger. Investigation into the corporate structures of the media and critical analysis of their content is one way to demystify the information industry.
Developing a critical consciousness about the communications industry is a necessary first step towards democratic control of information resources. (qtd. in Jenik 1991, 9)

According to the public access literature, as producers/viewers become aware of the content, structure, and operations of the media, they see television as a communications tool in the hands of individuals and groups with specific economic, cultural, and political interests. Thus, demystification allows the world presented by the media to be seen as a construction by vested interests, and not necessarily "reality" itself.

This perspective is widely reflected in the practitioner literature, as demonstrated by Bednarczyk (1986); Blau (1992a); Forbes and Layng (1978); Gever (1982); Gossage (1974); HGnaut and Klein (1969); Institute of Lifelong Learning (1986); Jenik (1991); Low (1974); Marsh (1974); National Cable Television Association (1984); Shamberg (1971); Stuart (1988); and United Cable Television (1981).

A wider context for the discussion of demystification is provided by C. Anderson (1975); Berrigan (1977); Bibby, Denford, and Cross (1979); Church (1987); Engelman (1990); Halleck (1984); Hollowell (1983); Hopkins et al. (1973); Johnson and Gerlach (1977); McLane (1987); Spiller ([1983]); Stoney (1989); and Willener, Milliard, and Ganty (1972).

However, the demystification of television, while seen as a generally desirable effect of video training within
community television, is not necessarily a given. In their ideological analysis, Bibby, Denford, and Cross question the purpose behind the demystification of television and conclude that the community television facilities in Great Britain did not help community producers understand the medium completely, because the management held a superficial, apolitical view toward the video medium. In fact, they concluded, "local television may . . . merely mystify further, by encouraging an interest in trivial issues and an unhealthy local chauvanism [sic]" (1979, 53).

Garnham (1990) believes that video actually reinforces the mystifying aspects of television, as amateur producers unsuccessfully attempt to reproduce the broadcast production conventions and styles.8 Willener, Milliard, and Ganty also question the demystification aspects of community television, noting that demystification can lead to remystification if the media is seen as only having power from popular support. Instead, the media should not be underestimated; it has a structural power that goes beyond a mere popular belief in its strength (1972, 134).

Overall, the public access literature recognizes the educational value and critical potential of training in the

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8 Garnham also states that "The great advantage of the 'process' defence of video from the point of view of its advocates is that it cannot be tested" (1990, 67). I disagree; I believe this dissertation represents such a test.
operation of video equipment within a community television setting. Critical perspectives argue that it is not sufficient to merely demystifying buttons and equipment, but that training must connect to a greater examination of the power structure of the media and the social implications of this structure.

**Critical Awareness/Critical Action (Consciousness-Raising).** The public access literature maintains that recognizing that the media presents a "representation" of the world can lead to critical awareness and critical action. This perspective also sees public access as enabling the disenfranchised to organize, to work as a group, and to think critically—identifying societal relationships and flexing their collective muscle for social change. Practitioners discussing the uses of media for empowerment include "Alternative Views" (1989); Bednarczyk (1986); Buske (1986); Forbes and Layng (1978); HGNaut and Klein (1969); Johnson (1986); Kucharski (1990, 1991); Low (1974); Mitchell (1974); National Cable Television Association ([1984]); Rutherford-Crest (1990); Shamberg (1971); Stuart (1988); and Walden (1991).

The following also offer discussions of the emancipatory aspects of video: C. Anderson (1975); Armstrong (1981); Berrigan (1977, 1979); Church (1987); Davitian (1987); Engelman (1990); Freebairn (1977); Gillespie (1975);
Hopkins et al. (1973); Kellner (1979); Mellencamp (1988); Price and Wicklein (1972); Rosen and Herman (1977); Sloan Commission (1971); Smith (1981); Spiller ([1983]); Steiner (1973); Stoney (1989); Willener, Milliard, and Ganty (1972); and Youngblood (1970).

The early community television literature illustrates the concept of a liberating video tied to social action:

Community video will be subversive to any group, bureaucracy, or individual which feels threatened by a coalescing of grassroots consciousness. Because not only does decentralized TV serve as an early warning system, it puts people in touch with one another about common grievances. (Shamberg and Raindance 1971, 57)

Another view of community television, which ties individual and group empowerment to control of one’s representations of self and of worldview through video, is reflected by Spiro as quoted in Roar! The Paper Tiger Guide to Media Activism:

I’m a camcorder commando, you’ll see there lots of them around here today. These people who are running around with camcorders are people who are taking control of their own images, and hopefully getting them to places where other people can see them.

TV is being held captive. It is our mission to liberate it.

We’re taking control of our TV sets and taking control of our lives. . . . We will represent the issues that television is hiding from the American public. We are America’s angriest home videos. (Paper Tiger Television Collective 1991, 57)

The connection between community television and traditional liberal democratic ideals--one of the basic
tenets of public access—is recognized within the academic literature by Engelman:

Community TV represented an attempt to break with mainstream forms of both commercial and public television by permitting broad participation in the most pervasive mass medium of contemporary American culture. "Access" became the rallying cry for a new conception of television as a tool of empowerment, as a means for fostering a more responsive government and a more democratic culture. (1990, 1)

In his overview of the origins of public access, Engelman alludes to the pluralist ideals of "participation" and "responsive government" that are at the heart of public access. The assumptions buttressing these ideals are examined later in this chapter.

While terms such as "empowerment," "critical awareness," and "critical action" are frequently used in the public access literature that addresses these concerns, there is little agreement regarding their definitions.

This literature implies that there is a need to consciously link critical awareness, however defined, and some sort of social action. The literature reflects the belief that, although such a critical connection may occur spontaneously as a by-product of video training, the linkage is more often successful if it is a result of a concerted effort on the part of those involved in the creation of community television programs. Writings in public access indicate that the critical realization that the media presents a "representation" of the world, rather than a
"natural" world, opens a space where alternative visions of reality can be created and displayed through television, and then acted upon in one's own life.

This study focuses on the public access literature's assumptions that empowerment is related to media literacy and to demystification of the media. The questions of critical awareness (consciousness-raising) and critical action will be explored as they relate to the heightened individual and social awareness that allegedly follows acquisition of media literacy skills and the subsequent demystification of the media.

While the public access literature is ambiguous regarding the concepts of empowerment and praxis, and the manner in which they are exhibited within a video training context, these concerns are addressed more fully by the literatures of critical pedagogy and media education, and are detailed below.

**Review of the Literature: Critical Pedagogy**

**Elements of Critical Pedagogy**

Critical pedagogy posits that all learning and teaching is ideological in nature, within both form and content, and expresses the goal of an education geared toward human liberation. Such a pedagogy is based on identifying oppressive forces within society, beginning at the level at which they impact an individual's life. Once these
ideologies are exposed, the individual and the collectivity are presumed to be better able to position themselves subjectively within society and move to change the power relationships within society.


Critical pedagogy does not directly explicate any one comprehensive theory of empowerment; quite the contrary, a number of competing concepts of empowerment emerge from interpretations of the literature.

Freire and Empowerment

One view of empowerment is discerned from Freire, whose theories arise from adult literacy work with impoverished groups in Latin America. To Freire, education and literacy are ongoing processes through which people become aware of their own self-worth and their ability to transform their social reality--a process Freire calls "conscientization," or consciousness-raising. McLaren describes Freire's
theoretic: "Becoming literate is not just a cognitive process of decoding signs, but of living one's own life in relation to others. Literacy becomes empowerment" (1989, 196; emphasis deleted).

Liberation is achieved through "praxis," defined as "man's activity of action and reflection . . . it is transformation of the world" (Freire 1970b, 119). While Freire does not use the term "empowerment" explicitly, in his advancement of a critical pedagogy he seems to be assuming that empowerment is related to liberation and praxis, and thus includes his model of (1) critical awareness, and (2) critical action.

Freire's critical awareness goes beyond mere cognition of "facts." Critical awareness involves an element of personal reflection that incorporates understanding how the individual positions himself or herself in relation to these "facts"; personal transformation is implied. Freire states, "There is not this dichotomy between consciousness and the world. . . . 'consciousness' is not something, some empty space within people. Consciousness is intentionality towards the world" (qtd. in Davis 1981, 58; emphasis in original). Critical awareness is more than a thinking process; it involves all manner by which we "know" the world, including "intuition, feelings, dreams, and desires" (Freire 1993, 105).
Critical action involves moving from critical awareness to action that entails changing the power relationships within society. Giroux comments:

> What is at stake in Freire's theory of liberation is that people should be able to generate their own meanings and frame of reference and be able to develop their self-determining powers through their ability to perform a critical reading of reality so that they can act on that reality. (1981, 130)

Critiques of Freire address his seeming assumptions of a hierarchy of consciousness, involving "cognitively superior individual[s]" (Schipani 1984, 21). Berger sees conscientization as elitist, involving "missionaries" engaged in the "conversion" process of "cognitive imperialism" (1974, 117-118).

These critiques, by focusing on the cognitive elements of conscientization, misinterpret Freire. Freire states that the oppressed cannot be liberated through any actions of others that do not include their own reflection and action, since the oppressed would be treated as objects, thereby defeating the process of conscientization.

Freire's focus is on critical awareness that emphasizes subjective positioning through reflection, in part on cognitive elements. He also insists that critical action moves in tandem with reflection to change the power

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9 This perspective of an actor-centered pedagogy will also influence the methodological direction of this study, as noted in chapter 3.
relationships within society. These delineations seem to separate Freire from the more contemporary critical pedagogists, as discussed below.

**Contemporary Critical Pedagogists and Empowerment**

Contemporary critical pedagogists, such as Giroux and McLaren, describe a pedagogy that is primarily centered on critical awareness, where the aspects of self-awareness or reflection are emphasized over action.

When these theorists do discuss critical action, it is with a practical emphasis on action within one's personal life; critical action within society seems to be approached merely as a theoretical desirability. For example, McLaren writes: "The major objective of critical pedagogy is to empower students to intervene in their own self-formation and to transform the oppressive feature of the wider society that make such an intervention necessary" (1988, xi).

McLaren seems to call for both societal and personal action, but in fact only implements societal transformation as a theoretic concept, not as an active practice. His call for action is illustrated above; the evidence that it is not an active practice is embodied throughout his early work.

The emphasis by contemporary critical pedagogists on awareness rather than societal action may be due to the fact that these theorists are working primarily from within the framework of institutional education rather than Freire's
lifelong learning situation. From their perspective, the praxis and societal transformation of critical action might well begin within the classroom.

However, the position of these critical pedagogists regarding societal action is in flux. Their concept of pedagogy is expanding beyond its application primarily to institutional education, and there is discernible movement toward Freire's definition of critical action.

For example, in a recent work, *Border Crossings*, Giroux articulates a more integrated theory of pedagogy within societal action:

Contemporary forms of critical educational theory with their narrowed vision and truncated view of the possibilities opened by new theoretical perspectives have kept the field too insular. It needs to make new connections, take up new paradigms, and open up different spaces with new allies in order to work simultaneously on changing the schools and wider social order. . . . [T]here is an increasing attempt by various cultural workers to engage pedagogical practice as a form of cultural politics. (1992, 2)

In describing a broader application of pedagogy, Giroux continues:

It means comprehending pedagogy as a configuration of textual, verbal, and visual practices that seek to engage the processes through which people understand themselves and the ways in which they engage others and their environment. (1992, 3)

It is in this expansion beyond the classroom walls that critical pedagogy intersects with the media education literatures, as described below. 10 This evolution beyond .

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10 In fact, Giroux and McLaren (1992) have become involved (continued...
institutional education also more closely approximates Freire's action/reflection model, the foundational model of critical pedagogy that has been strayed from in its translation to the classroom of the mass education system.

Empowerment: A Summary of Critical Pedagogy

Although there are contrasting opinions related to definitions of empowerment within critical pedagogy, there are also areas of general agreement within the literature. Empowerment appears to be related to an awareness of self and, through extension, of others and society in relation to the self. The literature equates empowerment with personal transformation, upheaval, liberation, and emancipation—an awakening, or "conscientization." The literature suggests that empowerment does not necessarily require direct social action based on this personal awakening, but some sort of activism is implied and is desirable.

It is the above definition of empowerment that guides this study.

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10 (...continued)
recently in the application of critical pedagogy to media education.
Review of the Literature: Media Education

Overview

Media education is a rather chaotic body of literature that traces some roots to educational reform movements and others to contemporary critical pedagogy, and which is also grounded in institutional education. Aside from the work of Halloran and Jones (1984) and Sholle and Denski (1993), few attempts have been made to organize this extensive literature.

For this study, the primary theoretical discussion of empowerment is provided by the critical pedagogy literature; media education serves to direct the foci of attention for empowerment within a video production context, as provided in the video empowerment chart (Figure 1) in chapter 1.

The primary contribution of this area is in delineating the component elements of a media literacy, as well as practical approaches to production training. In particular, the literature provides discussions regarding (1) the canon of production, including the symbolic logic behind these codes; (2) organization of media groups on macro and micro levels; and (3) relationships between media organizations and societal organizations and institutions.

These elements are significant because they are to help the learner attain the primary goal of media education: "lifting the veil" of television. By this is meant that the ostensibly "seamless," "natural" quality of programs is
exposed, and viewers are aware that programs are constructions that reflect the values and perspective of a producer, with related institutional affiliations. While competing schools of thought within media education may disagree about the reasons such a "lifting of the veil" is necessary— one school perceives this as a way to inoculate viewers against supposed media effects, another views this as a way to conscientize and liberate viewers— they nonetheless agree on this primary goal of the field.

Although Halloran and Jones (1984) outline various approaches to media education below, this study will focus on two fundamental divisions within the field: the traditional and the critical approaches. Traditional media education parallels traditional education reform movements; the traditional media education model contains the assumption of media effects. Critical approaches to media education coincide with critical pedagogy; critical media education questions basic power relationships within institutions and society and explicates goals of emancipation and social change.

Early media education is dominated by the traditional approach, but it does contain some elements of a critical perspective. Early media education shares with the public access literature an atheoretical tendency toward questions of empowerment, media literacy, and media demystification; these literatures also share assumptions of a technological
utopia. These similarities are not surprising; both public access and media education emerged within the social context of the late 1960s and early 1970s. It is as though the societal concerns of that era regarding mass media effects were addressed within institutional education by media education; within an applied setting, the concerns were managed by the establishment of public access cable television facilities.

However, the field is currently undergoing flux, as growing influences both outside (primarily critical pedagogy) and inside the media education field merge to call for a more sharply defined "critical media education." This relatively recent shift is discussed later in this chapter.

Major Approaches

One of the few arrangements of the media education literature has been undertaken by Halloran and Jones in a report to UNESCO in 1984. The authors note the influence of mass communication research on media education and present four categories into which they classify the divergent global approaches to media education: the inoculation approach, the critical viewer approach, the community media approach, and the images and consciousness approach. The classifications serve primarily to identify national trends in media education.
The inoculation approach sees the need for protection against what is considered to be the harmful effects of the mass media and mass culture.

The critical viewer approach posits that, after viewers come to understand the codes of television through acquisition of a "visual literacy," they will be able to control the influence of the media by seeing through its attempts at manipulation.

The community media approach assumes that communications is a community-based form of praxis where groups involve themselves in a creative process that leads to effecting change in the community. At the core of the community media approach is a critique of capitalism, and the objective in media education is to foster an awareness of social class.

The images and consciousness approach is oriented toward raising the consciousness of individuals; an emphasis is placed on demystifying the "naturalism" of the media by recognizing media products as constructions.

Halloran and Jones propose a "critical eclectic" (48) approach to media education that combines many of the features of the taxonomies described above. Such an approach would require

an adequate knowledge of the media as social institutions and communication as a social process, both operating in conjunction with other institutions and processes within the wider social systems. . . . [S]uch a research approach is the sine qua non for an understanding of media
operations and the communication process, and a fortiori the essential base for media education. (1984, 165; emphasis in original)

This analysis of media education by Halloran and Jones provides a framework on which to analyze the differences in approaches to media literacy and to see how these perspectives are reflected in the public access literature.

The categorizations within media education utilized in this study—traditional and critical—are reflected in the analysis provided by Halloran and Jones. The traditional perspective is represented by the inoculation and critical viewer categories, while an early critical perspective is reflected in the community media and the images and consciousness approaches. The critical eclectic perspective resembles the newly defined critical media education approach described later in this chapter.

Although all five of these positions are reflected to some degree within public access philosophy, it is the critical viewer perspective that is particularly valuable to this study. This position provides lists of component elements of media literacy that are employed in the areas of focus within the empowerment chart (Figure 2) in chapter 1; these are discussed below. The beliefs associated with the critical viewer category also most closely correspond with those of the public access movement. This perspective is identified predominantly with media education in the United States by Halloran and Jones.
Elements of Critical Viewing and Media Literacy

The Critical Viewer. As mentioned above, the areas of focus within the video empowerment chart in chapter 1 are directed, in part, by aspects of the traditional approach to critical viewing skills reflected in the critical viewer approach.

Halloran and Jones connect this perspective in the United States to the emergence of the concept of media literacy. It was during the mid-1970s that media literacy was adopted by "official" sources; Halloran and Jones cite the U.S. Office of Education's support for curriculum targeting "critical television viewing skills" (1984, 104). During this time period the Ford Foundation, the Markle Foundation, and the National Science Foundation recommended the following elements for classes in media literacy:

- Production conventions, analysis of media appeals, the character and role of non-verbal clues, the overview of the history and structure of the broadcasting industry, the economic basis for television, analysis of typical formats for entertainment programming, major concerns about negative effects of programming, analysis of the values portrayed in television content, standards for criticism of television content and, if possible, some direct experience with television equipment. (qtd. in Halloran and Jones 1984, 104)

In the late 1970s a UNESCO conference expanded the view of media education to include adult education and lifelong education as well as formal education in primary and secondary schools (Morsy 1984, 8).
The constituent elements of media literacy agreed upon within the traditional literature have not changed significantly in two decades. For example, Schamber notes that visual literacy involves the ability "to read and interpret visual symbols and syntax, to write or compose visual messages, and to evaluate the impact of visual communication" (1991, 17; emphasis in original). Notice that the emphasis remains on the acquisition of skills.

Halloran's and Jones's framework by which they organize the early work in media education is useful when examining Susan Neuman's historical overview of research on children and television (1991). The assumptions underlying the critical viewer approach are much in evidence throughout the research Neuman reviews.

**Media Literacy.** Neuman traces the research concerning television and children, and identifies the emergence of media literacy and critical viewing skills within the curriculum of schools in the United States. She reports that the 1970s introduced television research that began to focus not only on the content of television but also on its form—the visual symbol system used and the medium's possible impact on cognitive processing. Research in this area led to an interest in the "language" and grammar of television; eventually this research emerged in school curricula as critical viewing skills, to combat the assumed
harmful effects of television. Neuman describes these critical viewing skills as conceived with two major goals in mind: One was to demystify television by exposing children to the technology of the medium. The other focused on visual literacy skills and the syntax and grammar of television. Like other media, television was thought to be a form of literacy that needed to be formally taught before it could be intelligibly understood. (1991, 114-115)

Neuman states that the major impetus for critical viewing projects in the schools faded in the early 1980s, due to problems with scheduling, evaluation, and resource allocation. Neuman adds that these projects were not successful, in part because they attempted "to change the basic nature of viewing as a leisure activity" (1991, 119). 11

Neuman contributes additional documentation of the constituent elements traditionally expected to be found within a media literacy context. In addition, given her analysis of the failure of critical viewing projects, the community television setting should prove to be an interesting position from which to analyze media literacy skills and media demystification. Community television volunteer producers have themselves changed the nature of their relationship with television, since they have chosen

11 The relationship between "television as a leisure activity" and media education is addressed by Sholle and Denski (1994).
to become involved in the process of creating video programs.

This context of lifelong learning, where people have voluntarily changed the traditional dynamic of the television process, is a marked difference from a classroom setting with a captive audience. Thus, while the traditional media education literature is helpful to this dissertation by identifying elements of media literacy related to empowerment within public access, its roots in institutional education limits its effective application to the lifelong learning setting. While this limitation is shared to a lesser extent by critical media education, this school is conceptualizing a broader vision of media literacy beyond the institutional context, as discussed below.

Critical Media Education

While there is a certain unanimity of purpose within media education regarding the importance of breaking the "seamless," "natural" nature of television programs, more recent critics argue against the acceptance of the normative interpretation of "media demystification" and "visual literacy" that is prevalent in much of the literature described above. In calling for a "critical media education," these voices echo Halloran's and Jones's call for a critical eclectic approach to media education.
Duncan (1988) identifies the standard components of media education as including critical thinking skills and visual literacy skills. He also discusses the importance of values education, Freirean empowerment strategies, and alternatives to the mainstream media.

Masterman (1980, 1989) notes that practical work in the media is an important part of any media education curriculum, as is the cultivation of a critical analysis of media products. Masterman (1980) also recognizes that the development of media education beyond institutional education might best take place through the emergence of media centers. The roles Masterman outlines for such centers have long been accepted by many community television facilities in the United States. More recently, the connection between media literacy education and public access has been widely touted by the movement as a whole.

David Buckingham (1989, 1991) questions the basic assumptions of television's negative effects that underlie the mainstream media education theoretic and notes the dearth of studies that might support the claims of media education proponents. Buckingham points out:

The theory of television literacy which emerges here is thus fundamentally asocial. Its basic premise is that television literacy is a matter of individual "skills" or cognitive processes which may be identified without regard to the social contexts in which they are exercised, or the meanings which they are used to produce. (1989, 21)
While criticizing some of the unrealistic radical agenda he views within the media education movement, Buckingham agrees that

reflection and self-evaluation would appear to be crucial aspects of learning in media education. It is through reflection that students will be able to make their implicit "spontaneous" knowledge about the media explicit, and then . . . to reformulate it in terms of broader "scientific" concepts. (1991, 8)

Sholle and Denski also criticize the early forms of media literacy and, by extension, critical viewing skills as constructed on a model of the media acting as a creator of messages that imposed meaning on the audience. . . . These approaches are limited by their reliance on a theory of the media-audience link as one of activity-passivity. . . . These approaches face the further limitation imposed by liberal undertheorizations of 'critical thinking' in which all politics are removed from the concept of "critical," reducing it to the level of the banal and unproblematic discussion of "cognitive thinking skills." (1993, 302-303)

Particularly relevant to this study is the proposal by Sholle and Denski that a "critical media literacy" should grow beyond the classroom and enter into new relationships with people involved in various new technologies—including public access—and community action organizations using these technologies (1993, 317; 1994, 131).

Critical media education contributes particularly to this study by redirecting attention to the context and process by which literacy, demystification, and empowerment are achieved. Rather than focusing on the simple acquisition of skills, critical media educators address a
complex interplay of individual awareness and action linked to a broader social framework.

These authors also allude to pluralist assumptions of power that form the basis for much of the traditional media education literature and, by extension, the public access vision of empowerment through media literacy and demystification. It is at this point that the related access ideals of diversity of views and the First Amendment intersect with the empowerment vision; the liberal democratic assumptions underlying freedom of speech guarantees are explored later in this chapter.

Connections: Media Education and Critical Pedagogy

The area of critical media pedagogy—the blend of critical pedagogy and critical media education emerging today—is particularly significant to this study, given its particular heading toward the lifelong learning of media.

Critical media pedagogy has been forged by scholars such as Duncan (1988); Giroux and McLaren (1992); Masterman (1989); and Sholle and Denski (1993; 1994). Feminist perspectives on critical media pedagogy are provided by Luke (1994). The forging of critical pedagogy with critical media education is typified by Giroux and McLaren:

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12 See also the *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 18.2 (Summer 1994), with its focus on critical media pedagogy.
Pedagogy occurs wherever knowledge is produced, wherever culture is given the possibility of translating experience and constructing truths, even if such appear unrelentingly redundant, superficial, and commonsensical. 

A critical pedagogy of representation recognizes that we inhabit a photocentric, aural, and televisual culture in which the proliferation of photographic and electronically produced images and sounds serves as a form of media catechism—a perpetual pedagogy—through which individuals ritually encode and evaluate the engagements they make in the various discursive contexts of everyday life. (1992, xxiii-xxiv)

The emerging critical media pedagogy champions a pedagogy that not only addresses that which ought to be addressed by media education but also informs the manner in which learning about the media is transferred in an experiential setting.

Critical media pedagogy moves away from applying media education strictly in the institutional context of school-age children and toward the application within lifelong learning. This manifests itself in two ways: (1) by bringing the life of the learner into the context of the media education, as was traditionally mandated by Freire's approach to critical pedagogy; and (2) by extending media education to people who are not in the classroom.

Thus, critical media pedagogy allows for a transfer of the media literacy concepts to the broader context of community television producers with which this study is concerned.
Connections: Media Education and Empowerment

The conflict within critical pedagogy regarding empowerment is reflected in media education. Here, too, differing visions of what constitutes empowerment compete for attention. However, with recent exceptions, assumptions of empowerment tend toward a rather constricted view of critical awareness as mere cognition, with a cursory recognition of some aspects of self-reflection.

Cognition is addressed from within the media production perspective: awareness of media codes, media organization, and relationships between media and societal organizations and institutions.

Media education shares with contemporary critical pedagogy a lack of any but a theoretical emphasis on critical action within the personal or societal realm. However, this is changing as the critical media pedagogy described above moves toward a conception of critical pedagogy that goes beyond institutional walls.

Connections: Media Education and Public Access

The previously described historical context from which public access and media education emerged directed similar approaches to media literacy and demystification within the differing arenas. It can be presumed that the concerns for media literacy and demystification within public access—as within media education—reflect the greater concerns of the
society with the assumed effects of television and with methods by which to blunt this impact.

Recent critical approaches and interpretations of media education contest many of these assumptions of media effects. However, the media education chronology indicates that the foundational ingredients of media literacy and demystification remain intact. Thus, the constituent elements of empowerment within the video production context of public access remain constant throughout the media education literature; these elements constitute the areas of focus within the video empowerment chart.

Having reviewed public access literature related to the utopian promise of video and the more specific vision of empowerment—the literatures of critical pedagogy and media education—we will now turn to another aspect of the empowerment vision: the ideal of the diversity of ideas.

**Freedom of Speech and the Ideal of Diversity**

During discussions of public access, media literacy and demystification, and empowerment, several allusions have been made to underlying assumptions associated with liberal democratic philosophical thought. These assumptions are most pronounced in writings addressing the public access ideal of diversity.

Diversity of ideas is a fundamental tenet of public access, which states that the movement provides citizens the
opportunity to utilize electronic media in the exercise of their First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech. This public access canon of political participation is conceptualized for this study within the broader framework of the vision of empowerment, where persons become more critically aware of themselves, others, and society and possibly take action to change power relationships in these spheres.

To provide a context, the diversity tenet will be addressed here by exploring traditional and critical interpretations of First Amendment guarantees of freedom of expression; these interpretations will then be linked to coinciding viewpoints from within public access.

**Traditional Interpretations of Freedom of Speech**

Traditional interpretations of the First Amendment focus on the doctrine's emergence from philosophical movements, concentrating on the ideals of

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13 Good (1989), drawing from Lukes (1974), classifies pluralist assumptions about power within communication studies into 3 categories: the "thoroughly integrative view" (Lukes's "one dimensional view"), the "apologetically integrative view" (Lukes's "two dimensional view"), and the "critical view" (Lukes's "three dimensional view"). For the purposes of this discussion, I am utilizing the term "traditional" to include the first two categories within Good's taxonomy.

For applications of Lukes to public access, see Devine (1992b).

14 Sources for traditional interpretations of freedom of speech are provided by Emerson (1970); Haiman (1966); Lippmann (continued...)
enlightenment faith in the corrective of reasoned debate, and the attainability of rational, consensual truth; the scientific perfectibility of human beings and human institutions, especially through democratic rule; the necessity of an informed and tolerant populace to the functioning of a democracy; [and] the rise, with the Industrial Revolution, of the economic value of mass literacy. (Ruggles 1994, 141-142)\textsuperscript{15}

Based on these Enlightenment ideals, traditional liberal democratic justifications of freedom of speech rights have centered on (1) the necessity of open discussion as part of a process that furthers the discovery of truth; (2) the necessity of an informed citizenry to participate in the decision-making processes of a democratic society; (3) the necessity of open discussion to affect peaceful social change and avoid violent upheaval; and (4) freedom of expression as a necessary component of individual human development (Ruggles 1994, 14-16; Emerson 1970, 6-7).\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14}(...continued)
(1939); Logue (1972); Meiklejohn (1948); Mill (1859/1993); Ruggles (1994); Schauer (1985); and Stevens (1982).

\textsuperscript{15} Streeter (1990) discusses how these Enlightenment assumptions are reflected within the U.S. legal system. Good (1989) would classify these within the "thoroughly integrative view" of power and communication.

\textsuperscript{16} I note similarities between this view of freedom of expression as an important element of the development of the individual, and a portion of the empowerment definition in use through this study: becoming aware of oneself. However, the empowerment definition is based on a critical (self-reflective) awareness, rather than a nebulous concept of individual need.
First Amendment scholars disagree on the relative importance of the justifications described above. However, the majority place emphasis on the concept of freedom of expression as a social rather than individual need.\(^{17}\)

Meiklejohn states:

> The principle of the freedom of speech springs from the necessities of the program of self-government. It is not a Law of Nature or of Reason in the abstract. It is a deduction from the basic American agreement that public issues shall be decided by universal suffrage. (1948, 27)

Lippmann argues:

> So, if this is the best that can be said for liberty of opinion, that a man must tolerate his opponents because everyone has a "right" to say what he pleases, then we shall find that liberty of opinion is a luxury, safe only in pleasant times when men can be tolerant because they are not deeply and vitally concerned. Yet actually . . . there is a much stronger foundation for the great constitutional right of freedom of speech. . . . [W]e must protect the right of our opponents to speak because we must hear what they have to say. . . . [F]reedom of discussion improves our own opinions. (1939, 186)

In these views, freedom of speech and the tolerance of differing ideas associated with it are not ends in

\(^{17}\) These would follow Good’s (1989) classification of the "apologetically integrative view" of power within communication. This would also include others, such as Caristi (1992), who argues that the greatest aspect of the freedom of speech provisions is that of personal expression, because it includes all other aspects and also allows for human self-realization. Caristi uses this as a base from which to argue for public access to the broadcast media. Barron (1973) also argues for imposing requirements of access on the media, but from the standpoint of freedom of speech to promote a wider diversity of viewpoints within a democracy.
themselves but rather means of reaching a higher goal: truth.

Traditional interpretations of freedom of speech are mirrored in regulations and legislation guiding the U.S. electronic media, including those regarding public access cable television. These linkages will be reviewed next.

Public Access: The "Electronic Soapbox"

Some legal theorists from within the traditional perspective, such as Barron (1973), have interpreted the First Amendment as implying a public right of access to the media. Schmidt argues that the concept of the "marketplace of ideas" has deteriorated, given the monopoly concentration of ownership of media outlets. Thus, he contends, the First Amendment's prohibition of government interference with free speech and free press does not go far enough to ensure the desired diversity of ideas; access provisions to media provide "an affirmative dimension to the First Amendment, whereby the constitutional mandate would be used to force open the marketplace of ideas" (1976, 38).

Traditional interpretations of the First Amendment have been reflected in FCC regulations, congressional

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18 Caristi (1992) argues that self-fulfillment is the greatest overreaching benefit of Freedom of Speech, and that the government should make available access channels within the broadcast spectrum to extend the opportunity for self-expression.
legislation, and judicial decisions regarding the electronic media, as exemplified by the U.S. Supreme Court's Red Lion decision:

It is the purpose of the First Amendment to preserve an uninhibited marketplace of ideas in which truth will ultimately prevail, rather than to countenance monopolization of that market, whether it be by the Government itself or a private licensee. . . . "[S]peech concerning public affairs is more than self-expression, it is the essence of self-government." . . . It is the right of the public to receive suitable access to social, political, esthetic, moral, and other ideas and experiences which is crucial here. (Red Lion Broadcasting v. FCC. 1969, 390)\(^9\)

Traditional liberal democratic interpretations of the freedom of speech are reflected within the basic tenets of public access television. Proponents of community television have spoken passionately of the "electronic soapbox" nature of public access; since its inception, the medium's role as a guarantor of "an electronic First Amendment" right of freedom of speech through the media has

\(^9\) A key phrase of Red Lion was the observation that "It is the right of the viewers and listeners, not the right of the broadcasters, which is paramount" (Red Lion Broadcasting v. FCC 1969, 390). It is worth noting that the Red Lion case was decided in the same social climate of the late 1960s, when public access cable television was emerging as an alternative to mainstream monopoly broadcasting. The tone of the judicial, legislative, and regulatory climate has changed dramatically in recent years; today, the media's role as an electronic public sphere is deemphasized in favor of its function as a consumer marketplace.

For further discussion of Red Lion and contrary judicial decisions regarding the public's right to access of the media, see Caristi (1992). For further discussion of public access cable television and the public sphere, see Aufderheide (1992) and Devine (1992a).
been touted regularly. This view of access is exemplified by the following:

Deep historic roots give [access] its strength. It is the fundamental belief of the democratic approach to society that each individual has worth, has an equal right with all others to voice his or her opinion on public matters, and has an equal right to hear the expressions of all other fellow citizens.

Access to the means of communication both as "writers" and "readers" is fundamental to our First Amendment tradition. Until the advent of access to cable, exercise of such rights on television, the most powerful and pervasive means of communication in our society, was severely limited. (Rice 1983, 70)

Similar perspectives are reflected in Anderson (1975); Engelman (1990); Fuller (1994); Hollowell (1983); Johnson (1986); Johnson and Gerlach (1977); Meyerson (1985); Pool (1973); Rice (1983); and the Sloan Commission (1971). 20

The view of public access as a bastion of First Amendment rights was noted by Congress during discussion of the 1984 Cable Act:

the purposes of access regulations serve a most significant and compelling governmental interest—promotion of the basic underlying values of the First Amendment itself. . . .

Public access channels are often the video equivalent of the speaker's soap box or the electronic parallel to the printed leaflet. They provide groups and individuals who generally have not had access to the electronic media with the opportunity to become sources of information in

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20 These interpretations are within Good's (1989) "Thoroughly Integrative view."
Although the basic tenets of public access reflect traditional approaches to the First Amendment, the access canon is being questioned from within the movement by a growing number of critical analyses. These critiques mirror challenges by critical scholars of traditional perspectives on free speech doctrine; these arguments are explored below.

Critical Interpretations

Critical scholars have questioned basic tenets upon which the liberal democratic tradition is founded. Particular attention has been directed to (1) the nature of truth and the structure through which it emerges, (2) the attributes of power, and (3) the characteristics of the individual’s relationship with the collective.

Many critiques question Enlightenment assumptions that a single, definable, objective "Truth" exists and that this

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21 This language did not make its way into the 1984 Cable Act. For further reference, consult the 1984 Cable Act (Pub. L. 98-549).

The Cable Television Act of 1992 (Pub. L. 102-385), a major revision of the 1984 Cable Act, shifted the responsibility for cable access programming to the cable operators. This provision was successfully challenged in court by the ACM; the FCC is now appealing the decision.

truth can be known by human beings. Beyond this issue of truth is also a question of process: assumptions that truth is best revealed through a dialectic clash within the "marketplace of ideas."

Schauer reflects the skepticism of contemporary First Amendment scholars in his discussion of the "naive faith of the Enlightenment" that truth prevails over falsehood when the two compete in the "marketplace of ideas" (134). He notes:

Put quite starkly, truth does not always win out. . . . The inherent power of truth and reason was one of the faiths of the Enlightenment, but more contemporary psychological and sociological insights have confirmed the judgment of history that truth is often the loser in its battle with falsity. (1985, 142)

Dervin, Osborne, et al. provide a structural argument related to traditional liberal democratic ideals of free speech. They argue that a widespread belief in the dialectic emergence of truth privileges conflict models of communication that are challenged by contemporary thought in fields such as feminist scholarship (1993, 6).

Conflict models are at the heart of pluralist assumptions of the nature of power. Power (when it is acknowledged) is traditionally envisaged as having the following characteristics: observable in the form of

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23 Note that Schauer is arguing from within the traditional perspective; his approach follows Good's (1989) "apologetically integrative view."
conflict, operating within public view, shared equally by individuals, and working for the common good. Critiques of such pluralist precepts, such as those provided by Lukes (1974) and Good (1989), describe a process where power more often works covertly for specialized interests and is inequitably distributed within society. Dominant groups wield social power in part by institutional structure and their ability to manipulate the attitudes and perceptions of subordinate groups, leading to the latter's noncritical acceptance of their societal roles.24

Marcuse (1965/1983) questions liberal democratic assumptions of power and the ideology of tolerance. He concludes that suppressive power wielded by dominant forces within a society effectively limits the possibility of the exchange of ideas. Tolerance, he believes, appears as a partisan goal, a subversive liberating notion and practice. . . . [W]hat is proclaimed and practiced as tolerance today, is in many of its most effective manifestations serving the cause of oppression. (1965/1983, 316)

In Marcuse's view, the ideology of tolerance within the pluralist tradition serves to protect and strengthen the dominant societal forces, thereby perpetuating inequality and discrimination through the conservation of the status quo (1968/1983, 341). Tolerance, he argues, is repressive.

24 This last argument is related to Gramsci's (1973) discussion of hegemony.
In addition to questions of truth and the nature of power, liberal democratic assumptions of individualism are also challenged by critical scholars. Streeter notes that Liberalism assumes a dichotomy of individuals set against society, from which emerges "the familiar tenets of Liberalism, such as the belief that freedom of speech and individualism act as key mechanisms of resistance to social domination" (1990, 48).

Streeter (1990) and Dervin and Clark (1993) argue that this dichotomy is false; individuals and society cannot be divorced from one another. The individual and the collective depend upon each other for identity and growth. The societal structure is internalized within the individual, making fallacious the axiom and goal of Liberal thought: "the radical autonomy of the individual from the social" (Streeter 1990, 48).

The critical project, as it relates to this study's focus on issues related to freedom of speech, questions liberal democratic assumptions of truth, the structure through which truth emerges, the nature of power, and the individual/collective dichotomy. In their analyses, critical scholars espouse a more authentic democratic society, rooted in a fully developed understanding of the nature of human beings and the social formations they construct. This is exemplified by Ruggles:

I wish to conclude, then, by pointing beyond the critique of liberal rights to a cautiously hopeful
historical vista. . . . [T]he notion of freedom of expression has not only the repressive meanings we have explored but also a transformative potential, transcending liberal ideology. . . . I believe that "free speech" is a necessary element of effective practical reason, authentic democracy and consensual justice, even though these may be incompatible with the stability and growth of the capitalist market system. (1994, 163-164; emphasis in original)

It is from within this framework of cautious optimism—but still primarily within liberal ideology—that a limited critical analysis of public access emerges.

Public Access: Critiques from Within the Movement

Critical perspectives of the public access vision of empowerment and related community television assumptions in general were addressed previously in this chapter and in chapter 1; these critiques generally come from outside the alternative video arena.25 Within the movement, most analyses of public access as a means of promoting democratic communications draw from relatively traditional interpretations of the First Amendment.26 It is such interpretations that Good (1989), based on Lukes (1974), labels as "apologetically integrative." While they may appear to critique pluralist ideology, Good identifies such

25 In particular, see Bibby, Denford, and Cross (1979); Council for the Development of Community Media (1983); Garnham (1990); and Mattelart and Piemme (1980).

26 Exceptions are provided by Devine and Aufderheide, who do raise critical themes within their works.
arguments as "actually qualified criticisms that ultimately form an ironic articulation of apology for a 'common good' view of power" (1989, 52; emphasis in original).

The criticisms from within public access represent positive steps to move beyond naive assumptions of democracy and power, toward a more integrated view of access within a complex societal framework. Nonetheless, they continue to reflect traditional conceptualizations of freedom of speech issues. For example, the aforementioned discussion of the First Amendment, which visualizes free speech as a means of promoting public discourse rather than as a vehicle for personal expression, is reflected in this statement by the former chair of the NFLCP:

Our experience of public access to cable over the past two decades suggests that access may have nothing to do with democracy—nothing, that is, until the people who provide and use access connect the two. We can no longer simply assume that access to media tools and channels is enough.

If we take seriously this link between the right to speak with and hear from others and the daily practice of democracy, then we ought to organize our access tools to foster a kind of participation that enables people to take part in the decisions affecting their community. In this sense, simply talking a lot means little. (Blau 1992b, 22)

This challenge to the established public access assumption—that many voices equal diversity—reflects Lippmann's and Meiklejohn's arguments described previously in this chapter. Until recently, such a challenge was also nearly heretical within public access circles.
Public access has tended to promote the idea of freedom of individual expression rather than the quality of ideas heard within the structure of public debate on public issues (Devine 1990, 1992a, 1992b; Aufderheide 1992). Devine further describes access as a site of cultural activism: where traditional power relationships are challenged and where human agency is cultivated as people are allowed to come to voice. This, Devine asserts, is empowering (1992b, 22-23).

Here, then, is the intersection of discussions related to public access, freedom of speech, and empowerment. Devine has referred to elements of empowerment as they have been defined within this study: awareness and action. The manner in which public access allows persons to speak within the context of the public discussion of issues relates to both traditional interpretations of the necessity of public discourse and to critical interpretations of power.

Within this context, media demystification and media literacy become tools for challenging the way things are, not merely devices that allow persons to function as good consumers of some commodified version of "information."

Gaventa argues that the very act of participation on the part of people that were previously passive challenges the status quo. In his study of power relationships within an Appalachian valley, Gaventa draws from Lukes and Freire when he notes the following:
Combined with opportunities for reflection, the new participation of the previously quiescent should carry with it the development of political consciousness, leading to action upon more far-reaching demands. The simple breaking of patterns of non-participation will be a threat to the powerful. (1980, 209)

Following Gaventa’s logic, the very act of participation at access facilities by volunteer producers challenges the authority of the traditional media structure—who produces and who receives media messages.

Thus, despite the contested ideological assumptions upon which the public access vision of empowerment is founded, traditional and critical perspectives of public access television recognize the transformative potential of participation within a production context—for individuals, groups, and, possibly, society.

**Summary of the Literature Review**

This study is directed by the literatures of public access, critical pedagogy, and media education. Selected reviews of freedom of speech issues fill out areas related to diversity within the empowerment vision.

The public access literature provides the context for this study: societal concerns related to a monopoly dominated broadcasting system led to the establishment of community television centers. Assumptions of empowerment based on media literacy and demystification, and related to
ideals of diversity and freedom of speech, formed the basis for this action; these suppositions are not without contest.

Questions of empowerment are addressed by the critical pedagogy literature. This body of work indicates a debate over what constitutes awareness and action within empowerment: Is critical awareness cognition alone, or is it cognition and self-reflection? Is critical action any action implementing cognition/self-reflection, or is it action that leads to societal change?

This study will test for these elements of empowerment within the experience of public access volunteer producers. Specifically, this study asks if there is any evidence of any outcomes resultant from public access training and participation. If so, is there any evidence of structural change related to these outcomes?

In addition, critical pedagogy provides for the application of the theoretic of education to the lifelong learning setting and directs an approach to methodology for this study. This methodology is discussed in chapter 3.

The media education literature focuses on the elements of empowerment within the context of video production. Thus, it attempts to answer the question "What is empowerment in this specific context?" and give insight into the specific awareness and specific action that might be labeled as media literacy and media demystification. The
literature provides the constituent elements necessary for media literacy and demystification.

Literature related to freedom of speech issues has addressed the basic ideological assumptions upon which public access was founded; theorists argue about the possibility of addressing the inequities in society without a sophisticated conceptualization of power, the individual, and the nature of "truth." These discussions call into question the possibility of video training that allows for empowerment on the level of societal change.

In this study, the theoretic of a lifelong learning process is translated into the public access facility, where persons from a community are trained in the operations of video and audio equipment. Their reasons for approaching the facility and equipment are varied. Based on the literatures, this dissertation will investigate the assumptions of public access: that an awareness of self, others, and society—that is related to personal and/or societal action—emerges as the community producer learns and exercises technical skills.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

Review of Purpose

As stated in chapter 1, this dissertation will test the implementation of the public access vision and, thus, the viability of the vision itself. The video empowerment chart (Figure 1) in chapter 1 provides the parameters of this vision: that empowerment is possible through video production training that results in media demystification and visual literacy.

The site of investigation is a public access facility; the study focuses on persons who have been trained in the technical operations of video equipment and have produced a video program for cablecasting. The site and the sample will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Methodological Focus

As discussed in chapter 1, the metaphor of the "road map" is appropriate to this study, and the formula expressing this vision is stated as

media literacy ---> media demystification = empowerment (awareness of self, others, and society; action to change relationships in these areas)
Within the literatures, the destination points of the public access vision and the connecting routes of media education require a key, or rule book, for interpreting this map. This key is provided by the critical pedagogy literature, which addresses the orientation and context of an educational theoretic within an experiential setting such as public access video training.

The public access literature provides the vision of empowerment through video production training. This advances the setting, context, and tone of the study: that of an individual and group process of discovery, where video production is not an end in itself but a means of correcting societal inequities. This implies that the methodology involved in this study needs to attend to the issues of context and empowerment, and ideally should itself help participants empower themselves by constructing a worldview from their particular vantage point.

The media education literature provides a closer look at the elements that constitute empowerment within a video production context. This literature also directs specific procedures that must be attended to in order to emphasize process-oriented learning over button-pushing instruction. This literature, too, implies that the context within which learning takes place should be studied from the viewpoint of the student/trainee rather than the institution.
As mentioned in chapter 1, it is the critical pedagogy literature that actually provides a framework that allows the specifics of empowerment to be oriented from the viewpoint of the student/learner, and to include the ever-changing range of student/learner experiences.

Specifically, the critical pedagogy literature directs that an investigation of empowerment through video training needs to attend to the following: (1) Education is broadly defined to include all lifelong learning situations. (2) A person takes control of his or her own education; learning is not imposed from the outside. (3) Learning is imbedded in the time/space/context of the person entering the educational experience. The person's personal context at the time influences the learning that takes place, which somehow fits into the person's life situation. (4) Testing outside of the personal context is not relevant because such testing does not show what persons actually are learning: the process.¹

Accordingly, critical pedagogy speaks to the necessity of a study that is theoretically and methodologically oriented from the point of view of the learner—the community producer. Thus, the literature mandates an actor-oriented, interpretive, qualitative approach.

¹ This is drawn primarily from Freire; it also includes contemporary critical scholars such as Giroux, McLaren, and Giroux and McLaren.
Approaches to Data Collection and Analysis

The assumptions of the public access, media education, and critical pedagogy literatures as they intersect with one another and this study suggest a line of inquiry that focuses on an awareness of self, others, media operations, and societal conditions on the part of the community volunteer producer. Such a focus is appropriate to the interpretive paradigm of social science research. As described by Putnam,

> interpretive approaches aim to explicate and, in some cases, to critique the subjective and consensual meanings that constitute social reality. . . . the interpretive approach is a generic category, one characterized by the centrality of meaning in social actions. (1983, 32)

As an amalgam of approaches, an interpretive perspective includes both naturalistic and critical traditions; the naturalistic is primarily descriptive, while the critical is focused on evaluation and emancipation, in part through self-reflection (Putnam 1983). This study represents a hybrid of the two approaches: it describes the experience of video production from the perspective of the producer, and encourages self-reflection and evaluation with an eye to individual and social empowerment.

As such, this study calls for an interpretive methodology that is congruent with the vision of public access, one that shares the public access view of information (in this case, video technology) as a means, not
an end in itself, and also has in common the sense of self-growth and change that underlies the public access philosophy. The methodology must reflect the blend of naturalistic and critical approaches within the interpretive paradigm.

Such a methodology is provided by Dervin's Sense-Making, which allows for the application of a theoretic of personal empowerment within a self-directed learning experience and provides a means to follow the theoretic of change over time. The perspective of the experience is that constructed by, in the case of this study, the community producer.

Sense-Making

Sense-Making provides a theoretic, a methodology, and a set of data collection methods designed to study how people make sense of their worlds. According to Savolainen, "sense-making theory offers an inspiring user-centered

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2 In fact, Freire, who is at the foundation of critical pedagogy as applied in this study, also informs Sense-Making, making this methodology particularly appropriate to this dissertation. See Dervin (1983, 1989a, 1992).

3 This discussion of Sense-Making is drawn from Atwood and Dervin (1982), Dervin (1983, 1989b, 1992); Dervin, Harlock, Atwood, and Garzona (1980); Dervin, Jacobson, and Nilan (1982); Dervin, Nilan, and Jacobson (1981); and Savolainen (1993). The above relate to the utilization of Sense-Making in the field of information science. This discussion also draws on the use of Sense-Making within a mass media context, as in Dervin (1989a).
approach" that "does in fact meet the minimum criteria of research paradigm" (1993, 26-27).

Sense-Making is consistent with the interpretive analytic, as well as the theoretic and methodological approaches directed by the public access, media education, and critical pedagogy literatures. As demanded by these literatures, Sense-Making provides the following for this study: (1) an actor-oriented approach; (2) an approach that views information seeking and use by humans as a means, not an end in itself; and (3) methods of data collection that attend to elements of evaluation and emancipation through self-reflection on the part of the informant.

Sense-Making privileges the perspective of the actor over that of the researcher; it also provides a set of self-reflective tools that the informant utilizes during the interview process. This self-analysis element encouraged by the Sense-Making process is analogous to aspects of empowerment described within the public access, media education, and critical pedagogy literatures. As such, in addition to Sense-Making's application in the field of information seeking and use, its theory and procedures make it ideal for this study. These theories, procedures, and applications are further discussed below.

Sense-Making: Theoretic and Methodological Overview.

Sense-Making has been used for over 20 years in a wide
variety of contexts. However, its primary application has been in the area of information seeking and use. Sense-Making's focus in the field of library and information science provides a context that is analogous to the public access setting applied in this study. Both settings involve people seeking information for reasons both purposive and nonpurposive; both circumstances involve the use of information seeking and use not as ends in themselves, but as means to other ends.

Sense-Making makes some ontological and epistemological assumptions that are useful as a template for looking at the manner in which humans make sense of their world. The ontological assumption is that reality is discontinuous, that reality is only in part patterned, and contains "gaps."

Epistemologically, Sense-Making assumes humans move through physical, cognitive, and emotional time/space based on the sense they make of the world. Humans are viewed as needing to make new sense at those times when they see themselves as facing internal (e.g., cognitive, emotional) and/or external (e.g., physical barriers, new situation) gaps. Then the individual construes information in such a manner as to create a new bridge or a revised sense—a bridge over the gap.

As a methodology, Sense-Making approaches this theoretic of the gap by circling attention among the key points portrayed in the metaphor in Figure 3: the situation
involved, the gap encountered, the bridge constructed to traverse the gap, and the helps/utilities that resulted in bridging the gap. The situation is how the actor experiences self in time/space. The gap is the incompleteness for which the actor creates a bridge. The bridge consists of thoughts, feelings, ideas, and answers, as well as the criteria informants employ when utilizing these as materials with which to build the bridge. Helps include what is done with the thoughts, feeling, ideas and answers—how the actor sees himself or herself as facilitated by the bridge.4

Figure 3: The Sense-Making Metaphor

4 Figure adapted from Dervin and Clark (1987a, 27)
Sense-Making: Data Collection. In the methods of data collection, Sense-Making builds on a core "time-line" interview, which is the method seen as most isomorphic to the theoretic assumptions of Sense-Making. The time-line interview is a structured, open-ended interview that allows the informant to construct a perspective of information seeking and use relative to a self-constructed view of time and space. The informant describes in detail the events surrounding a particular situation. The responses are then triangulated in terms of the metaphor, focusing on the situation, gap, bridge, and helps, probing the manner in which the interviewee has constructed the event and the significance of this event to himself or herself.

The time-line interview is highly structured and relatively low in questions of specific topical content. The questions in a Sense-Making interview focus the informant's awareness on developing pictures in words of how he or she experienced the situation, gap, bridge, and helps. The informant supplies the content. The informant explicates a personal universe guided by the structure's attention to the informant's perception of a particular personal situation or experience, gaps he or she perceived and bridged, and the manner in which the informant was helped by his or her construction of this bridge.5

5 As used in this dissertation, "perception" moves beyond simple visual sensation and refers to the construction of a (continued...)
From these gaps, or questions and confusions, people and situations that helped or hindered a resolution to these gaps are probed. The context and significance into which the informant places these events are explored.

While the individual interview is the primary method of data collection within Sense-Making, group interviews have also been utilized that follow the Sense-Making theoretic. The rationale for utilizing both types of interviews in this study are articulated later in this chapter.

Sense-Making and This Study. As it applies to this study, the Sense-Making theoretic assumes that a person approaching the public access facility have encountered one or more discontinuities in his or her life, one or more gaps that he or she is seeking to bridge. Video production and training somehow, for this person, seems at least part of the bridge.

5(...continued)
perspective from which one experiences and defines the world. This is related to a concept of perception described by Merleau-Ponty (1962).

6 For the application of Sense-Making to group interviews, see Dervin (1991) and Dervin and Clark (1987a, 1987b). Krueger describes an approach to questioning within group interviews that is congruent with Sense-Making: participants are encouraged to establish a context for their answers by "thinking back" and anchoring themselves in a particular time/space situation while considering their responses (1988, 65).
Such attempts by producers to make sense of their world links this study with those related to purposive information seeking and use. However, Sense-Making also allows for the exploration of nonpurposive attempts on the part of producers toward making sense. As suggested by the public access, media education, and critical pedagogy literatures, empowerment may arise from either purposive or nonpurposive actions. Sense-Making allows for consideration of both. At the same time, Sense-Making expands the context of the producer beyond the training experience by enabling the producer to articulate visions of empowerment that lie outside that defined by the video empowerment chart in chapter 1, as well as alternative visions of public access that are not related to empowerment.

**Group and Individual Interviews**

This study utilizes primarily the individual time-line interview as a method of data collection. However, group interviews are also employed, as they provide benefits that complement those of the solitary interview. As noted by Krueger, group interviews are "a particularly appropriate procedure to use when the goal is to explain how people regard an experience, idea, or event" (1988, 20); they also increase the sample size for qualitative research. Morgan (1988) agrees that group interviews are well suited "to topics of attitudes and cognitions." He recognizes that the
strength of the group interview is in its ability to explore topics, and indicates that individual and group interviews complement each other within a research project (1988, 19).

In addition, the theoretic foundations of group interviews, as noted by Krueger (1988) and Morgan (1988, 1992), hold that attitudes are shaped in part by interaction, not solely in isolation. Given that the video creation process most often is conducted within a group context, group interviews are particularly appropriate. The group interview provides for data collection in a setting that is social in nature, permitting yet another circling of the responses provided by the informants in the group and individual interviews.

In this study, the questions used in the group interviews arose from the video empowerment chart in chapter 1 as well as from Sense-Making theory. Responses by

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7 I also note a similarity between certain aspects of the group interview process and Freire's "conscientizing groups."

8 In this study the group interviews are considered secondary to the individual interviews. Krueger (1988) notes that drawbacks to the group process include an inability to follow through on individual responses and check individual levels of awareness. Such weaknesses would miss the questions of individual empowerment that are vital to this study.

In addition, group interviews traditionally involve participants who do not know one another. For this study this is quite difficult given the relatively small pool of community producers, the even smaller number of ACTV trainers, and the social nature of the public access experience.

As such, the group process provides a valuable addendum to the basic data collected by individual interviews; it does not replace the solitary interviews.
community producers provided an overview of the variety of perceptions toward empowerment and public access; these responses were used to refine the in-depth protocol and to select informants for individual interviews. The questions and selection processes for both group and individual interviews are described later in this chapter.

Research Site

The site of focus was the experiential setting of the public access arena. Specifically, Access Columbus TV (ACTV), in Columbus, Ohio, served as the test site, and the public access vision was tested as it relates to those active within the heart of the vision: community volunteer producers of public access programs. In 1992, ACTV received the Community Communications Award for Best Public Access Facility in the United States, as selected by the national community television organization, the Alliance for Community Media (ACM).

As a prototypical facility, ACTV (operated by Columbus Community Cable Access, Inc.) represents a site particularly suited to this test of the vision of public access. As stated by T. Andrew Lewis, Executive Director of the ACM,
development, ability to generate diverse programming and public participation and innovations in television production and applications. Columbus Community Cable Access' performance was truly outstanding in all of these areas. (ACTV 1992, 1)

Operations

ACTV is one of three cable channels operated in the Columbus area under a franchise agreement between the city of Columbus and local cable companies. ACTV offers programming created by the public at large; the other channels provide programs created by educational and governmental institutions. The educational access channel is under the supervision of an educational consortium; the City of Columbus operates the government access channel.

Columbus Community Cable Access, Inc. (CCCA) incorporated in 1980; the organization is governed by a community Board of Trustees.9 The current staff of ACTV numbers nine full-time and three part-time employees.10 Three of the full-time staff members are involved in training on a regular basis, while most staff members fill

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9 Prior to CCCA's incorporation in 1980, individual cable companies in the Columbus area provided some public access to equipment and channels. Some of the respondents in this study were active producers during that time period.

10 The full-time positions include Executive Director, Operations Director, Executive Assistant, Program Coordinator, Training Coordinator, Production Coordinator, Video Specialist, Production Assistant, and Secretary/Receptionist.
in as needed in training. All of the part-time employees have been hired exclusively as training instructors.

ACTV provides equipment for program production and for training in its use, schedules programs for cablecast on the public access channel, promotes channel programs and events, and maintains a corps of volunteers for production assistance. According to the ACTV 1991 Annual Report, the channel cablecast 16 hours a day, 7 days a week to a potential audience of 222,000 cable homes. Of this, 1,420.5 hours (2,173 programs) were first-run programming, with all but 260 hours produced locally. Attendees of technical workshops numbered 1,032; from 1984 to 1991, more than 5,500 persons were trained (3).

This study focuses on this group of trainees; in particular, on those who have become program producers and who submitted access programs in 1992 and 1993.

**Trainees: Volunteers/Producers**

At ACTV there are procedures for integrating newcomers into the production process. This orientation process is outlined in Figure 4. The process begins with the orientation meeting, at which the rules and operating procedures of the facility are explained. Following this meeting, a person is considered qualified to submit programs for cablecasting on the access channel.
In general, producers are persons who have taken responsibility for the production of a program and its submission to ACTV. These programs may have been created using equipment other than that of ACTV; the show may also have been created by others. In other words, producing a program does not necessarily involve becoming technically involved in a program. Such "armchair producers" might have no hands-on experience with the equipment, leaving the actual technical creation in the hands of others.

For persons interested in becoming more involved in the process of program production, a series of technical workshops provide training in equipment operation and program construction. Specific technical workshops are required for the use of each piece of equipment and, once

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Figure 4:
The ACTV Orientation Process
completed, authorize the trainees to operate that equipment either for their own show or someone else's program. In the latter case, trainees act as volunteers, working primarily as part of the technical crew.

When a trainee completes one or more of the technical workshops and moves on to create his or her own program for submission to ACTV, he or she is considered a producer. These producers have accepted responsibility for a particular program; they may also volunteer to work as crew on other productions. Working as crew on another's program provides the volunteer producer with "volunteer hours"—a type of credit that may be applied to the cost of equipment rental.

It is this group of producers— who are also involved in the technical aspects of program production—that is at the heart of this inquiry. In particular, those producers who have been certified in one or more technical workshops, who are currently active at ACTV will be considered. For the purposes of this study, "active" is defined as having submitted one or more programs in the year starting July 1, 1992, and ending July 1, 1993.

This study will also involve those access producers who have "dropped out" of the "active" producer category. For the purposes of this study, "dropping out" is defined as having submitted one or more programs in the six months
including January 1 and July 1, 1991, but not in the
"active" time period between July 1, 1992 and July 1, 1993.

The inclusion of both those currently active in public
access program production and those who have dropped out of
program production is crucial. Over time, public access
facilities experience a high dropout rate among community
producers and volunteers. For the purposes of this study,
those currently involved in program production are
considered to be closest to the public access vision of
empowerment as described in the video empowerment chart.
Those who have dropped out of the process provide an
interesting and important point of comparison with those who
are currently participating in the creation of public access
programs, and may shed significant insights on the viability
of the public access vision of empowerment.

As discussed in chapter 1, it is possible to define
empowerment from a variety of perspectives; the elements of
a specific empowerment as represented in the video
empowerment chart emerges from an interpretation of the
literatures of public access, media education, and critical
pedagogy. The focus of this study follows empowerment that
is said to result from working with video equipment--
previously seen to be "mystifying" in nature--and using this
equipment in the Freirean sense of "speaking with one's own
voice." Technical training is where this public access
vision of empowerment is implemented; those assuming
responsibility for programs have acted most concretely within the area of production. Hence, the "hands-on" producers--both active and dropout--constitute a more refined sample for this test of the public access vision than does a sample that includes the "armchair producers" and the volunteer crew.

Therefore, this dissertation focuses on producers who are also involved--or who have been involved in the past--in the technical aspects of program creation. Certainly "armchair producers," volunteer crew members, and additional groups ancillary to this study--including the viewing audience, the access staff members, and others--may be considered empowered in some ways by their contact with public access program production. However, they are not the focus of this study.

In focusing on technically trained active and inactive producers, the sample in this study draws from informants who meet the following criteria: (1) producers who have completed one or more of the technical workshops beyond the orientation session; and either (2) "active" producers who have submitted one or more programs during the time period July 1, 1992, to July 1, 1993; or (3) producers who submitted one or more programs during the time period of January 1, 1991, to July 1, 1991, but who have not submitted a program during the "active" period.
Research Design

Data Collection

Collection of data took two forms: individual interviews and group interviews. Informants were offered a nominal monetary incentive for their participation in the group and individual interview processes.

Informant Selection

Theoretic. This study utilized purposive maximum variation sampling, characterized by Lincoln and Guba as "the sampling mode of choice" for naturalistic inquiry (1985, 201); purposive maximum variation sampling resembles the stratified sampling of quantitative research.

"Purposive" sampling (Lincoln and Guba 1985) and "theoretical" sampling (Glaser and Strauss 1970; Strauss and Corbin 1990) both refer to the desire to collect data with an eye to the emergence of theory grounded in the data. As such, dissimilar sources are sought out until the data compiled begins to repeat itself, achieving redundancy.

This study represents a cross between naturalistic and critical modes of interpretive research, as described by Putnam (1983). As such, it did not rigidly follow the
characteristics of purposive sampling nor the naturalistic paradigm as set out by Lincoln and Guba (1985).  

**Sampling Formula.** The sample for this study was ACTV active and dropout producers with technical training, as described above. Informants met one of the following criteria: (1) active producers who had recently submitted their first program(s); (2) active producers who had been producing shows for the longest period of time; (3) active producers who fell between the shortest and the longest time periods; and (4) dropout producers who had been producing for an unspecified length of time. See the group and individual sampling frames below (Figures 5 and 6).

An attempt was also made to ensure that respondents represented all three of the program categories established by ACTV: news and public affairs; arts, entertainment, and sports; and religious. Producers were grouped according to the category of their last program. Sample selection

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11 Within interpretive inquiry, a variety of approaches are often utilized to circle the subject of investigation. Rogers (1982) notes varying approaches to communication research presented by the "empirical" and the "critical" schools, as well as the road between these, as established by Latin American scholars such as Freire and Beltran.

This study reflects this "middle road" in the amalgam of methods used in respondent selection.

12 A minor program category was not included in this study: public service announcements. Active producers within this category had also submitted programs in the other program categories, and were included in those categories.
based primarily on program category was considered arbitrary, since community producers often create a variety of programs spanning several program classifications. Greater emphasis was placed on the length of time since technical training and the time since submission of the first program.

The use of time and program categories as factors in respondent selection were intended to expedite a maximum variation directed by theoretical and purposive sampling. The goal was to discern differences and similarities among producers with differing program interests. Utilizing the longest, shortest, and middle time periods from technical training as a factor in sample selection was intended to increase the possibility of divergent experiences.

A total of 28 community producers were interviewed for this study; 24 participated in the group interviews and an additional 4 were active only in the individual interviews. Of the 9 in-depth personal interviews, 5 had been group participants and 4 had not.

Qualitative research often operates with a smaller sample size compared to that of quantitative research. Patton observes: "What is crucial is that the sampling procedures and decisions be fully described, explained, and justified so that information users and peer reviewers have the appropriate context for judging the sample" (1990, 186).
Accordingly, the method of selecting the sample is described below.

**Sample Selection: Group Interviews.** The sample was obtained by searching ACTV public records to create a list of producers who had submitted programs between July 1, 1992, and July 1, 1993—the "active" time period of this study. An additional list was culled of producers who had submitted programs between January 1 and July 1, 1991. Persons on the former list were considered active producers; those on the latter 1991 list, but not on the active list, were considered dropout producers. Persons known by the ACTV program director to have no ACTV technical training were dropped, resulting in 97 active and 37 dropout producers.

From these lists ACTV technical records were searched; persons were removed that were not listed as having technical training, as confirmed by the ACTV program director. Current or former employees of ACTV were also removed. The active list then totaled 89 producers. After eliminating persons known to be active as crew members but not active as producers, the dropout list totaled 19 producers.

An attempt was made to contact all persons on these lists to verify training status and dates, program submission dates and categories, and active or inactive
status. Dropouts were asked if they considered themselves "inactive"; all contacted agreed with this categorization. In all, 55 active producers and 12 dropout producers were contacted; 51 of the active producers and 9 of the dropout producers agreed in principle to participate in the study.

At this point, names were ordered according to the date of first training as recalled by the producers. These were then divided according to length of time since first training, resulting in the following divisions: short (1990-1993), mid (1986-1989), long (1982-1985), and dropout (1985-1990).

Repeated attempts were then made to contact all 51 active producers and 9 dropout producers and to invite them to group interviews. Of these, 33 active producers and 7 dropout producers agreed to participate in the group interviews; these were mailed confirmation letters with a modest monetary incentive to encourage attendance. Final attendance in the active producer group interviews numbered

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13 ACTV records regarding training had recently been computerized, and were not judged to be entirely reliable prior to 1989. The dates provided by ACTV and the respondents did not differ significantly.

14 These also corresponded to initial groupings by the program director prior to telephone contact with the producers. The years involving the dropouts are provided for information only; they were not a factor in deciding membership in this category.
Sample Selection: Individual Interviews. Producers were selected for individual interviews after group interviews were completed. Selection was made according to criteria described below; all producers contacted agreed to participate. Producers were paid a small honoraria for their efforts.

A total of 9 personal interviews were conducted; 5 informants were selected from among the group interview participants, and 4 informants did not participate in the group interviews. Again, selection was conducted in this manner to provide the widest possible variation in the sample.

Informants were chosen judgmentally according to the sampling frame in Figure 6. The following criteria were used: (1) representativeness of maximum variation, primarily as evaluated from responses during the group interview or telephone calls, but also involving demographic and situational factors; and (2) the producer's ability to articulate his or her thoughts, ideas, and feelings, as seen from participation within the group interviews or during telephone discussions. Judgmental sampling is in keeping with the structured/flexible approach possible within interpretive research.
### Figure 5:
**Sampling Frame: Group Interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM CATEGORY</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Mid</th>
<th>Long</th>
<th>Drop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEWS/PUBLIC AFFAIRS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTS/ENTERTAIN/SPORTS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIGIOUS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Participants</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 6:
**Sampling Frame: Individual Interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTENDED GROUP INTERVIEW</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Mid</th>
<th>Long</th>
<th>Drop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DID NOT ATTEND GROUP INTERVIEW</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Participants</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*a* A pilot individual interview was conducted with a participant from the group interview.
Group Protocol

The protocol for the group interviews followed the Sense-Making theoretic by circling the situations, gaps, bridges, and helps sensed by the producer throughout the production experience. In addition, the interactive process provided a structure that allowed people to interpret and question their own experiences, as well as those of others.

Within the group interview process, four major rounds of the group were made, each addressing one of the four questions presented in the group protocol. In the rounds, each informant talked in turn, giving both dominant and less assertive participants a more equitable opportunity to speak.

The group protocol first explored the situation that brought the participant to public access, then moved to the most memorable experience with public access, most memorable training experience, and thoughts on the vision of public access.

The following is an outline of the procedure used by the facilitator in the group interviews:

1. Participants were received; the procedures were outlined. Self-introductions were made in turn around the table. At this point, the group was closed to additional participants.

2. Informants were asked to describe what brought them to public access television.

3. Informants were asked to describe their most significant experience with public access. Responses were probed and, if appropriate, respondents framed
their experiences with an eye to how they helped or hindered the informant, the community, and society.

4. Informants were asked to describe moments during their technical training that stand out in their minds. Responses were probed and, again, helps and hindrances were explored.

5. Participants received a list of three positive statements and three countering statements of public access philosophy. Respondents provided their perceptions of the public access vision. Again, responses were probed and framed according to helps and hindrances to the informant, the community, and society.

6. A sheet requesting demographic data was distributed; respondents completed the forms and returned them to the group facilitator.

The group protocol used in this study is provided in Appendix A.

Based on the completed group interviews, revisions were made in the individual protocol; this was then pilot tested three times.\textsuperscript{15} Two of these tests were with focus group members; the final pilot test involved a group participant (Alfred) and is included in this study.

**Individual Protocol**

The protocol for the individual interviews observed the Sense-Making theoretic by providing for a triangulation of interviewee responses with a modicum of content-specific direction. As such, questions allowed for open-ended

\textsuperscript{15} The individual protocol evolved through eight revisions and two pilot tests prior to the group interviews.
responses, with follow-up questions aimed at completing the Sense-Making triangle of situation-gap-bridge-help.

Although some interpretive researchers argue against the use of structured instruments within qualitative research, McCracken notes that a structured instrument is indispensable for a lengthy, in-depth qualitative interview and "does not preempt the 'open-ended' nature of the qualitative interview" (1988, 24-25). He argues that structured instruments free the researcher to focus on the informant and allow for the orderly collection of data.

The protocol asked respondents to focus on a particular moment chosen by the respondent according to certain criteria. Questions then triangulated the responses as directed by the Sense-Making method.

The following is an outline of the questions in the individual protocol for public access program producers:

1. **Overall.** Informants were asked to describe in general their work with public access television, including the number of programs worked on as producer or crew.

2-7. **Incidents.** Producers were asked to identify a specific moment in their experience with public access according to criteria listed below. Each incident was then explored with a series of probes, also described below.

   Producers were asked to think back to a moment during their involvement with public access that reflected:

   2. **Their best experience.**

   3. **Their most difficult, hardest, and/or worst experience.**
4. When they looked at the television industry, society as a whole, or television programs "differently"—more critically or analytically.

5. When their efforts were wasted energy.

6. When their personal vision of access was working well.

7. When the public access vision was not working well. (Respondents were responding to three statements related to the public access vision.)

8-10. Impacts. Producers were asked to evaluate their entire experience with public access and to focus on a moment that reflected their experience’s impact on:

8. Their life.

9. Their community.

10. Columbus.

11. The society as a whole.

With a program or impact providing a temporal/spatial anchor, each response was then probed:

P1-P8. Probes. For each incident and impact listed above, informants were asked for the following:

P1. Ideas, thoughts and/or conclusions they had at that particular moment in time.

P2. Feelings and/or emotions at that moment.

P3. Questions and/or confusions they had at that particular point in time. These confusions may have related to things they thought or felt or to things people did or said to them.

P4. Helps: Informants were asked if they received helps at that point, including things people did or said, or anything else the informant considered helpful. Each help mentioned was then probed for its utility to the respondent, utilizing the Sense-Making "chain," where responses are probed repeatedly.

P5. Hindrances: Respondents were asked if anything stood in their way at that particular moment. Each hindrance was then "chained" to determine how it operated as a barrier to the respondent.
P6. Helps wanted: Informants were asked what might have helped them at that particular point in time. Each response was probed utilizing the "chain" to determine the manner in which each might have helped.

P7. Related to personal life: Responses to the incident or impact were recounted, and the respondent was asked if these related to the informant's life in some way.

P8. Other thoughts: The respondent was asked if there was any additional information he or she wished to add to the comments.

The following questions concluded the interview:

12. Demographic Data. Respondents were asked to provide information about their education, age, race, sex, work status, and parents' work.

13. Additional Comments. Respondents were asked if they wished to provide any additional comments or information.

The individual protocol used in this study is provided in Appendix B.

As with the group protocol, the individual protocol probed the question of empowerment deductively and inductively. It allowed a means of examining the video empowerment chart directly, and also used the Sense-Making analytic as a means of addressing the world as seen by the actor.

Field Operations

Group Interviews. Four group interviews were conducted with a total of 24 participants. The groups were constituted according to the shortest/middle/longest/dropout columns in the sampling frame in Figure 5; each
group contained producers that had roughly the same amount of experience producing video programs.

The group interviews took place on August 19, 23, 24, and 25, 1993, in the conference room of the Ohio Legal Center on the Ohio State University campus. Meetings were 2 hours in length and were recorded on audio and video tape; these recordings were then transcribed. Facilitators included a Professor of Communication at Ohio State University and the study's primary researcher, a doctoral candidate with the Department of Communication.

Group participants included 6 women and 18 men. Of these, 5 women and 10 men were primarily of European descent; 1 woman and 7 men were primarily of African descent; and 1 man reported having "5 different ethnic groups in my blood."

**Individual Interviews.** Nine respondents were interviewed for this study; 8 interviews were conducted throughout the fall of 1993; a final session took place in the spring of 1994. With one exception, interviews were conducted at various branches of the Columbus Metropolitan Library.

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Interviews were conducted by the primary researcher; they ranged in length from 2 hours to 5.5 hours. The interviews were recorded on audiotape, and handwritten notes were taken during the interview; interviews were then transcribed.

Interview participants included 5 women and 4 men. Of these, 3 women and 1 man were primarily of European descent, and 2 women and 3 men were primarily of African descent.

With one exception, informants were selected from the previously compiled lists of active and dropout producers; the exception was Denise. While Denise had completed her first training workshop in 1991, her last training session was in 1993, and she had submitted her first program only weeks prior to the interview in December of 1993.

While other study participants also had attended training workshops in 1991, Denise became the most recent addition to the active list of producers, warranting a change in the sampling formula in an attempt to optimize maximum variation. Heretofore, the most recent producers participating in the group interviews had been trained in 1990 or 1991; they had submitted their first programs in 1991 or 1992. Producers trained in 1992 or 1993 and submitting their first program during these time periods had elected not to participate in this study.\(^\text{17}\)

\(^\text{17}\) One producer who declined to participate said, "My show is too simple; I wouldn't have that much to say in a (continued...)"
This modification of the sample is consistent with the principles of interpretive research, where the sample is often selected and adjusted as the process of data collection unfolds, in part to achieve saturation and redundancy (Glaser and Strauss 1970; Lincoln and Guba 1985; Strauss and Corbin 1990).

**Interview Participants.** Anecdotal evidence within the practitioner literature of public access has described a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences on the part of persons involved in public access. The people taking part in this study reflected a similar heterogeneity.

Participants included persons with high school educations and persons with university graduate degrees. The respondents were without jobs, and held positions in the mainstream media; they worked as bus drivers, legislative assistants, high school teachers, data entry operators, computer specialists, ministers, engineers, entrepreneurs, musicians, and letter carriers. Income levels varied.

17(...)continued)

focus group." He also declined an individual interview. Upon completion of one or more technical workshops, many people work as volunteer crew on other shows before producing their own program. During this time period, volunteers hone their production skills.

It may be that many new producers require a period of time before they feel comfortable talking about their experiences, or have a context in which to place these experiences.
cultural backgrounds were mixed, parental work histories were widely diverse, and respondents spanned ages 20 to 63.

Analysis of Data

Analytic Guidelines

Analysis of the data in this study generally follows the guidelines of the interpretive, qualitative, naturalistic/critical inquiry described by J. Anderson (1987), Crabtree and Miller (1992), Lincoln and Guba (1985), Patton (1990), Putnam (1983), and Strauss and Corbin (1990).

As mentioned by and Glaser and Strauss (1970), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Strauss and Corbin (1990), the primary thrust of interpretive inquiry is to develop grounded theory. Strauss and Corbin (1990) imply a dialectical process by which deductive and inductive analysis interact, which seems to be a part of the process of creating a theory that emerges from the data.

This study favors the positions of Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Patton (1990) regarding the necessity of both inductive and deductive analyses within an interpretive framework; this is in keeping with the "middle road" noted by Rogers (1982) and Beltran (1976) earlier in this chapter. As such, this study disagrees with Lincoln and Guba (1985), who argue that naturalistic inquiry must employ solely inductive analysis.
In addition, this study utilizes modest quantitative methods of reporting results; these are used merely as an indicator of activity within the cells of the video empowerment chart; they also help direct attention to more qualitative indicators provided in chapter 5 in the form of themes. This is also in keeping with the "middle road" advocated by Rogers (1982) and Beltran (1976).

**Analytic Phases**

Individual and group interviews for this study were transcribed, coded, and analyzed using deductive and inductive analyses that are primarily qualitative in nature. Chapter 4 focuses on the deductive analysis by quantitatively tracing the activity within the cells of the video empowerment chart presented in chapter 1. The findings from this activity are then utilized in chapter 5, which focuses primarily on an inductive analyses by investigating themes that arise from the interview data.

**Deductive Phase.** This study operates deductively by setting a priori categories established from an analysis of the media education and critical pedagogy literatures as described in the video empowerment chart in chapter 1. As a priori categories, they involve deductive analysis in that they evolved from the literatures, removed from the actual experience of the study participants.
Responses from informants are coded and analyzed in keeping with the parameters established by the deductive chart. Chapter 4 presents the results of coding and analysis primarily in numeric form, providing an overview of the amount of respondent talk from the perspective of the video empowerment chart.

Patton (1990, 406) notes that the discovery of patterns and themes within the data is a creative process involving the judgment of the qualitative researcher. The use of numeric indicators in this study provides a method of noting patterns within the data as they relate to the video empowerment chart. The findings then add to a discussion of inductive themes in chapter 5.

**Inductive Phase.** The patterns described in chapter 4 will be addressed in chapter 5 as part of a discussion of themes emerging from the data; the relationships within and among themes also will be examined.

The use of categories and themes to analyze qualitative data is discussed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), Patton (1990), and Strauss and Corbin (1990). This study follows the inductive analysis described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Patton (1990); these authors note that themes are not divorced from any a priori categories derived deductively, but emerge in relation to the focus of the study as directed in part by the research literature.
Patton notes that "sensitizing concepts"—concepts that have their origins in the research literature—allow for inductive application by examining the manner in which the concept is exhibited in a particular context (1990, 391).

Accordingly, the themes to be investigated in this study are directed by the research questions as outlined above. The focus in this chapter is on inductive themes related to the "sensitizing concepts" of media literacy, media demystification, and empowerment, the latter defined as an awareness of self, others, and society, and actions to implement these awarenesses—particularly actions to address inequities in society. As sensitizing concepts, this study operates inductively by investigating the manner in which these concepts are manifest within the context of the producer’s world.

Strauss and Corbin agree that the research literature contributes to the development of the categories in the study, but warn that borrowed concepts from the literature carry with them standard definitions and meanings. These meanings may inhibit the comprehensive exploration of a theme by both the researcher and readers (1990, 69). These authors suggest methods for avoiding such conceptual blinders and for developing an analytic depth—a "theoretical sensitivity" (75-76); particularly notable are the strategies of constantly questioning the parameters of concepts and comparing themes.
Accordingly, while the themes explored in this chapter are related to the sensitizing concepts described above, they are defined more from the perspective of the data than the research literature.

The procedures suggested by Strauss and Corbin reverberate in the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985), who advance the use of "negative case analysis" as a check on analysis. This technique involves seeking out exceptions to the defined themes and categories in order to push the limits of analysis.18

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Sense-Making focuses on the gap-breaching activity engaged in by people as they move through their life path. As part of the analysis, Sense-Making also focuses on the gaps or struggles of the informants (Dervin 1983). As such, Sense-Making analytic techniques parallel those described above by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Lincoln and Guba (1985).

18 Lincoln and Guba adapt the technique of negative case analysis from Kidder, and provide this warning: The reader should be forewarned, however, that Kidder takes an avowedly conventional posture; one might regard her work as one those attempts at striking a compromise between the "qualitative and quantitative paradigms." Nevertheless her treatment is instructive, and we shall draw heavily upon it. (1985, 308)

As discussed in chapter 3, this study avowedly employs methodological practices that include an amalgam of perspectives in an attempt to circle the phenomenon under investigation.
The inductive analysis in this study utilizes the techniques of constant questioning (Strauss and Corbin 1990), "negative case analysis" (Lincoln and Guba 1985), and "circling the gap" (Dervin 1983).

Patton summarizes the focus of qualitative research as it relates to deductive and inductive analysis:

Theories about what is happening in a setting are grounded in direct program experience rather than imposed on the setting a priori through hypotheses or deductive constructions. (1990, 44)

This describes the focus of chapter 5: to center inductively on the experiences of the producers participating in this study, using deductive sensitizing concepts, and integrating the findings discovered through the quantitative overview of the data as presented in chapter 4.

**Strategy for Data Presentation**

**Analytic Frames**

The structure for the presentation of quantitative and qualitative data primarily involves two frames of reference: the public access "road map" to empowerment as outlined in the video empowerment chart, and the life path as conceptualized by Sense-Making. These were discussed previously in this chapter and in chapter 1; a synopsis of the essential elements of these two frames follows.
The Vision Road Map. In chapter 1 the metaphor of the "road map" was used to describe the video empowerment chart. The chart details the specifics of the public access vision of empowerment, where video training takes one on a journey leading through the map points of media literacy and demystification, with a final destination of empowerment. The formula used to describe this vision road map (and the chart) is:

media literacy ----> media demystification ----> empowerment (awareness of self, others, and society; action to change relationships in these areas)

Although the metaphor of the map is useful in describing the video empowerment chart, it is well to keep in mind that the map (and the chart) describe a dynamic process of movement on the part of the producer, rather than fixed points in time or space.

The vision road map is based on the video empowerment chart; as such, it reflects the aspirations and visions of the public access movement as a whole. Therefore, the road map is based on an institutional perspective, rather than a participant perspective.

The road map is encountered by producers in the form of the ACTV orientation process described earlier in this chapter. The orientation process reflects an attempt to implement the access vision at a specific facility.

The framework of the road map drives the research questions of this study and provides the sensitizing
concepts of media literacy, media demystification, and empowerment around which the quantitative and qualitative results are organized in chapters 4 and 5.

**The Sense-Making Life Path.** Earlier in this chapter the Sense-Making epistemology was presented. Humans are assumed to be moving through a physical, cognitive, and emotional time and space (their "life path") based on the sense they make of the world. The Sense-Making model assumes both an ontological and an epistemological mandate to make sense in a world where neither reality nor human artifacts provide complete instruction. Thus, using the Sense-Making perspective, humans are seen to be needing to make new sense at those times when they see themselves as facing internal (e.g., cognitive, emotional) and external (e.g., physical barriers, new situations) gaps. At these moments, the individual construes information (defined broadly) in such a manner as to create a new bridge or a revised sense—a bridge over the gap. The Sense-Making triangle is presented in Figure 7.

Methodologically, Sense-Making circles attention to the situation involved, the gap encountered, the bridge constructed to span the gap, and the helps/uses that resulted in bridging the gap. This study focuses on the life path as it intersects the access experience.
As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this study adopts the Sense-Making theoretic and assumes that a person approaching the public access facility has encountered a discontinuity in his or her life and is seeking to bridge this gap. For this person, video production and training somehow seem to be at least a part of the bridge.

Sense-Making differs from the vision road map in that it is focused on the perspective of the individual rather than that of the institution.

**Synthesis of Analytic Frameworks.** The frameworks of the Sense-Making life path and the vision road map are interconnected. The life path provides a contextual placement of the access experience within the life of the producer. The producer’s access experience includes an encounter with the vision road map (empowerment through video training as defined by the chart). Figure 8 illustrates the synthesis of these frameworks.

Figure 8 reflects the various dimensions of the frameworks of the access vision road map and the life path as they impact the deductive and inductive analyses of this study.

The access vision provides a focus on the research questions, sensitizing concepts from the research literature, and a framework by which to organize the
Figure 7:
The Sense-Making Triangle

Figure 8:
Synthesis of Analytic Frames
findings. This frame is emphasized particularly in the deductive analysis in chapter 4.

The life path provides an orientation from the producer’s context to the sensitizing concepts of media literacy, media demystification, and empowerment. This perspective is emphasized particularly in chapter 5.

The resultant frame privileges the perspective of the institution over that of the individual in the deductive analysis, and privileges the perspective of individual over that of the institution in the inductive analysis. Inductively, the frame positions the access experience as one of the producer’s many gap-bridging activities on his or her life path. The access vision’s path to empowerment through video training and participation is conceptualized here as an institutional structure that is experienced by the individual as part of his or her total access experience. The institutional frame—including definitions of media literacy, media demystification, and empowerment—may or may not hold relevance in the individual’s world; the institutional structure is of use to the producer as it serves the producer’s gap-bridging needs.

The frames presented here are not static; there is a constant interplay within and among the structures. The frames offer tools for analyzing the quantitative data and the themes emerging from this study. The application of these frames is as follows:
The life path offers an orientation from the point of view of the producer; his or her experiences form the basis of the themes explored in chapter 5.

The road map offers the framework by which quantitative and qualitative data will be presented: utilizing the sensitizing concepts of media literacy, media demystification, and empowerment.

**Coding Operations**

The video empowerment chart provides a framework through which the data collected through interviews were evaluated. Responses were categorized following the framework provided by the chart definitions in Figure 2, which was described in chapter 1 and is reproduced below.

Areas of the chart served as the basis for categories through which interview data was analyzed deductively. Responses were coded, first according to the rows of the areas of focus, and then by the columns of the empowerment domains, with assignment within the subcells of cognition/reflection and action negotiated throughout the coding process.

Responses were included only if the respondent indicated that the experience was a result of access participation. Data was judged by one coder: the primary researcher of this study.¹⁹

¹⁹ As the single coder of the interview material, I am (continued...)
Subsequent to coding, the nine individual interview respondents were individually judged according to their amount of talk within each of the 30 subcells of the chart (cognition/reflection or action). Using an ordinal-level judgmental scale, responses were characterized as none, and represented by a zero (0); a few responses, represented by a one (1); a moderate amount of responses, represented by a two (2); many responses, represented by a three (3); and quite a few responses, represented by a four (4).

Amount of talk was defined by the coder (the author) as the number of different references the respondent made during the interview process that were judged as falling within a particular subcell of the chart. A reference was judged as different if it involved an entirely distinct situation or if the respondent circled back to the same situation but with a slightly different emphasis.

Coding and judging of responses were continuously adjusted by the author until intracoder agreement was reached on every judgment.\(^{20}\)

\(^{19}\)(...continued)

aware of the experiences and agendas the researcher brings to the coding process, and the manner in which these interests can unintentionally foreground certain aspects of the data. I consistently utilized this reflectivity when coding the data; it helped me adopt a rather conservative approach to coding.

\(^{20}\) For a discussion of intracoder and intercoder agreement within qualitative analysis, see Miles and Huberman (1984, 63).
Initial Results of Coding and Analysis

The numeric results of the coding are presented in-depth in chapter 4; the section below will explore the initial results of coding and analysis and suggest methods of analysis that are pursued in chapters 4 and 5.

Figures 9, 10, and 11 represent examples of the responses as they were coded in relation to the video empowerment chart. The definitional chart (Figure 2) used in the coding operations described above has been expanded to include these examples. The figures present the examples according to the columns of the empowerment domains: Figure 9 displays the column of the production domain, Figure 10 indicates the column of the personal domain, and Figure 11 represents the column of the societal domain.

In the deductive analysis in chapter 4, the frequency of talk within the cells is analyzed. The numbers are based on responses similar to the examples in Figures 9, 10, and 11.

The examples in these figures also suggest the manner in which the chart relates to the inductive themes discussed in chapter 5. The inductive analysis focuses on the interplay within the cells and subcells, and their relationships with other cells and subcells.

For example, in Figure 9, the cell at the intersection of the row of the canon of production and the column of the production domain shows cognitions, reflections, and actions
Figure 2:
Chart Definitions
### Figure 9:

Exemplars of Informant Responses Within Cells:  
Production Domain

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>C/R: Respondent Indicates New Awareness of How Ca non relates to Actual Production</th>
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Key:  
C/R = Cognition/Reflection awareness in the cell as a result of access participation  
A = Action in the cell as a result of access participation
Figure 10:
Exemplars of Informant Responses Within Cells: Personal Domain
Figure 11:

Exemplars of Informant Responses Within Cells:

Societal Domain
on the part of the respondents. This cell is considered an element within a discussion of media literacy—the "reading" and "writing" of television programs. Tom, a long-time producer, provides a typical response that exemplifies activity within the subcell of cognition/reflection, and the subcell of action:

Tom: ... Some things just scare people, and television is a scary thing if you don't look at it with an objective, you know, point to it. That objective point is getting to your viewing audience to give them something you think they desire to see or hear. Because if you don't have that objective point they can cut you off. I've had people tell me that -- see my objective is not ACTV helping this church. That's not my objective. My objective on ACTV is just allowing people to see who Jesus Christ is and let them make their own choice, okay. Because I know that the Lord is the One that deals with this church, you know ... (b4F7A).

Here Tom not only is referring to the necessity of setting a goal for a video program, he also establishes that he sets such a goal for his own production: letting his audience come to know Jesus Christ. In so doing, Tom exhibits the cognitive, reflective, and action dimensions of the cell: he is aware of the necessity of establishing a program goal (cognitive), he connects this with his own situation (reflective), and he implements these awarenesses in his program (action).

In meeting the cognitive, reflective, and action dimensions of the cell, Tom would fit the qualifications of a moderate-level test for empowerment within a production context. Since he did not clearly state a relationship
between his program and societal change, his response does not fit the more stringent test for empowerment described by Freire, as discussed in chapters 1 and 2.\(^{21}\)

In addition to the relationships within the cell described above, Tom's response above also connects to other cells of the chart. In this case, Tom's objective of reaching an audience is related to the cell at the intersection of the row of "others" and the column of the production domain.\(^{22}\)

This example suggests the benefits of exploring themes within the data as part of the inductive analysis, rather than proceeding cell by cell across the rows of the areas of focus or the column of the empowerment domains. Tom's response does fit neatly within the imposed institutional framework provided by the video empowerment chart; however, his comments take on additional relevance when they are placed within the context of recurring themes shared by other producers in this study. In Tom's case, themes

\(^{21}\) In the interest of clarity, the cognition/reflection subcell will be referred to as the cognition subcell throughout the remainder of this study.

The composite term "cognition/reflection" was used in order to recognize the differing perspectives on awareness within the selected critical pedagogy literature: awareness as simple cognition, awareness as cognition and reflection, and the more stringent awareness linked with action.

The use of the term "cognition" includes a recognition of these contentions.

\(^{22}\) Tom is not listed in Figure 9 as an example within this cell.
related to media literacy and an awareness of a viewing audience are evident; these themes and others are described and explored in greater detail later in chapter 5.

**Summary**

The literatures of public access, media education, and critical pedagogy direct an actor-oriented, qualitative study within the interpretive paradigm of social science research.

This dissertation utilizes the theoretic and methodologies of Sense-Making in an investigation of empowerment as it related to community producers at a public access cable television facility in Columbus, Ohio. Data collection used in-depth, open-ended, structured group and individual interviews. Informants were selected through purposive maximum variation sampling techniques. Data analysis involves both deductive and inductive approaches, utilizing numeric indicators of frequency of talk (chapter 4) and an analysis of themes (chapter 5).
CHAPTER IV
DEDUCTIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Overview

As stated previously, the focus of this dissertation is to test the implementation and viability of the public access vision of empowerment through media demystification and visual literacy that is said to result from video production practice. It is this vision of empowerment that will be examined in this chapter, employing the video empowerment chart described in chapter 1 and utilizing primarily deductive, quantitative analysis.

Specifically, this study tests the public access vision of empowerment by asking the following questions:
(1) Based on their public access experiences, do producers of public access programs have an awareness of the media's structure and operation, including a sense of the codes of television? (2) If such an awareness exists, does the awareness of media's structure, operation, and codes assist producers in defining a sense of self, others, and society? (3) If producers exhibit the awareness described above, do they take action to implement these awarenesses? (4) Does
action to implement awarenesses include actions that address inequities, particularly within the societal realm?

As described in chapter 3, this chapter addresses these questions by analyzing the data deductively, employing primarily quantitative methods. The findings are then utilized in the qualitative analysis in chapter 5.

**Presentation of Quantitative Results**

**Analytic Framework**

As described in chapter 3, the access vision road map—as a metaphor for the video empowerment chart—provides the framework by which the data will be presented in this chapter. The formula used to describe the map (and the chart) is:

media literacy ---> media demystification = empowerment (awareness of self, others, and society; action to change relationships in these areas)

The data below are organized with an eye to the access map as represented by the video empowerment chart. As discussed in chapter 3, data will be presented as they relate to the chart within a simple quantitative context: a counting of the amount of talk by producers judged to be located within a specific cell of the chart.

The data are presented in three passes. The first looks at the average amount of talk ratings across the deductive chart. The second pass focuses on the percentage
of respondents judged as having any talk in the cells of the chart. The final pass concentrates on the percentage of respondents judged as having a great deal of talk in the cells of the chart. Each of these passes illuminates slightly different, but interconnected, aspects of the data.

In each pass, tables provide numeric data according to the following: overall cells (both cognition and action subcells), cognition subcells alone, and action subcells alone. Figures then illustrate the numeric data and compare results within the tables.

Average Ratings

Method. Chapter 3 details the methods by which scores were obtained as a result of coding of individual informant responses. These scores are presented in Appendix E.1 The scores within the cells were then summed and divided by 270 (30 subcells × 9 respondents) to provide an average amount of talk ratings across the deductive chart.

---

1 It is important to note that these scores represent the amount of talk by respondents within a given area, as judged by one coder. The scores are useful primarily as a guide to activity within the chart, as judged by the amount of respondent talk.
Average Ratings: Overall. Table 1 provides average ratings across all 15 chart cells (cognition and action), within the rows of the areas of focus and the columns of the empowerment domains. The table represents averages computed according to a maximum possible score of 8 (cognition = 4 + action = 4). An analysis of Table 1 indicates the following patterns:

- The greatest amount of talk overall (cognition + action) is related to production. This takes place in the canon of production (3.1), the production domain (2.4), and the intersection of these two (4.7).

- The least amount of talk overall (cognition + action) is related to non-media institutional relationships (1.0), the societal domain (1.9), and the intersection of the non-media institutional relationships and the personal domain (0.4).

Figure 12 illustrates the interior of Table 1.

Average Ratings: Cognition. Table 2 provides average ratings across only the 15 cognition subcells of the chart, calculated according to a maximum possible score of 4. An analysis of Table 2 yields the following patterns:

- The greatest amount of talk judged as cognition with in an area of focus is in the category "others" (2.3). This is followed by the canon of production (1.9), media organization (1.7), self and self life (1.3), and non-media institutional relationships (0.8).

- The greatest amount of talk judged as cognition among the empowerment domains is shared by the columns of the production and personal domains (1.7). The least amount of talk occurs within the societal domain (1.5).
• The greatest amount of talk judged as cognition occurs (1) at the intersection of "others" and the personal domain (2.7); and (2) at the intersection of self and self life and the personal domain (2.7). These are followed closely by talk occurring at the intersection of the canon of production and the production domain (2.6).

• The least amount of talk judged as cognition occurs at the intersection of the row of non-media institutional relationships and the column of the personal domain (0.2).

Figure 13 illustrates the interior of Table 2.

Average Ratings: Action. Table 3 provides average ratings across only the 15 action subcells of the chart, calculated according to a maximum possible score of 4. An analysis of Table 3 provides the following patterns:

• The greatest amount of talk judged as action among the areas of focus is within the canon of production (1.7). This is followed by "others" (0.6), media organization (0.5), self and self life (0.3), and non-media institutional relationships (0.2).

• The greatest amount of talk judged as action among the empowerment domains is the production domain (0.7). This is followed by the personal domain (0.5) and the societal domain (0.4).

• The greatest amount of talk judged as action occurs at the intersection of the row of the canon of production and the column of the production domain (2.1).

• The least amount of talk judged as action occurs at the intersection of the row of the canon of production and the column of the production domain (0.1).

Figure 14 illustrates the interior of Table 3.
Table 1:

Average Rating of Amount of Talk:
Overall (Cognition + Action)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Societal</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Media</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain Average</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2:

Average Rating of Amount of Talk:
Cognition Only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Societal</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Media</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain Average</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3:

Average Rating of Amount of Talk:
Action only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Societal</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Media</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain Average</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 12:

Average Rating: Overall (Cognition + Action)
Figure 13:
Average Rating: Cognition Only
Figure 14:

Average Rating: Action only
Figure 15:
Comparison of Average Ratings of Amount of Talk: Domains of Empowerment
Figure 16:
Comparison of Average Ratings of Amount of Talk:
Areas of Focus
**Average Ratings: Comparisons.** Figure 15 illustrates the comparison of the bottom margins of Tables 1, 2, and 3. This indicates the average ratings of the columns of the domains of empowerment.

Figure 16 illustrates the comparison of the right margins of Tables 1, 2, and 3. This indicates the average ratings of the rows of the areas of focus.

**Percentage With Any Talk**

Response scores described in chapter 3 were then studied to determine the percentage of respondents with a score judged 1 or greater in each of the 15 chart cells (cognition + action). This reflects respondents judged as placing any emphasis in each of the 15 chart cells.

**Percentage With Any Talk: Overall.** Table 4 provides the percentage of respondents judged as providing any talk across all 15 chart cells (cognition + action). An analysis of Table 4 indicates the following patterns:

- With the exception of non-media institutional relationships, all of the rows of the areas of focus indicate 100% of any talk by producers.

- The least percentage of any talk among the rows of the areas of focus occurs within non-media institutional relationships (77.8%).

- All of the columns of the Empowerment Domains reported 100% of respondents were judged as providing any talk in the production, personal, and societal spheres.
• The least percentage of talk within the subcells occurs at the intersection of the row of non-media institutional relationships and the column of the personal domain (33.3%).

Figure 17 illustrates the interior of Table 4.

**Percentage With Any Talk: Cognition.** Table 5 provides the percentage of respondents judged as placing any emphasis in only the 15 cognition subcells of the chart. An analysis of Table 5 indicates the following patterns:

• With one exception (non-media institutional relationships), 100% of the producers were judged to have made any references to cognition within the rows of the areas of focus.

• Non-media institutional relationships contained the least percentage of any talk judged as cognition among the rows of the areas of focus (77.8%).

• All of the columns of the empowerment domains reported 100% of respondents were judged as providing any talk of cognition in the production, personal, and societal spheres.

• The least percentage of any talk judged as cognition occurred at the intersection of the row of non-media institutional relationships and the column of the personal domain (22.2%).

Figure 18 illustrates the interior of Table 5.

**Percentage With Any Talk: Action.** Table 6 provides the percentage of respondents judged as placing any emphasis in only the 15 action subcells of the chart. An analysis of Table 6 provides the following patterns:

• The greatest percentage of any talk judged as action among the rows of the areas of focus was within the
The least was within non-media institutional relationships (44.4%).

- The columns of the production and personal empowerment domains were equal in the percentage of any talk judged as action (100%). The societal domain was the least (88.9%).

- The least percentage of any talk judged as action (11.1%) occurred at the intersection of the row of non-media institutional relationships and the column of the production domain.

- Low percentages of any talk judged as action (22.2%) were registered in three subcells: the intersection of the row of non-media institutional relationships and both columns of the personal and societal domains; and the row of self and self life and the column of the societal domain.

Figure 19 illustrates the interior of Table 6.

**Percentage With Any Talk: Comparisons.** Figure 20 illustrates the comparison of the bottom margins of Tables 4, 5, and 6. This indicates the percentages of respondents judged as placing any emphasis in cells within the columns of the domains of empowerment.

Figure 21 illustrates the comparison of the right margins of Tables 4, 5, and 6. This indicates the percentages of respondents judged as placing any emphasis in cells within the rows of the areas of focus.

**Percentage With Much Talk**

Response scores in Appendix E were then studied to determine the percentage of respondents with a score judged
Table 4:
Percentage of Respondents With Any Talk:
Overall (Cognition + Action)
(N = 9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Societal</th>
<th>Entire Foci</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canon</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Media</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5:
Percentage of Respondents With Any Talk:
Cognition Only
(N = 9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Societal</th>
<th>Entire Foci</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canon</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Media</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6:
Percentage of Respondents With Any Talk:
Action Only
(N = 9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Societal</th>
<th>Entire Foci</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canon</td>
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<td>44.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Media</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 17:

Percentage of Respondents with Any Talk: Overall (Cognition + Action)
Figure 18:
Percentage of Respondents with Any Talk:
Cognition Only
Figure 19:

Percentage of Respondents with Any Talk: Action Only
Figure 20:
Comparison of Percentages of Respondents with Any Talk: Domains of Empowerment
Figure 21:
Comparison of Percentages of Respondents with Any Talk: Areas of Focus
3 or greater in each of the 15 chart cells (cognition + action). This reflects respondents judged as placing more than a moderate amount of emphasis in each of the 15 chart cells.

**Percentage With Much Talk: Overall.** Table 7 provides the percentage of respondents judged to have placed more than a moderate amount of emphasis across all 15 chart cells (cognition + action). An analysis of Table 7 indicates the following patterns:

- The greatest percentage of much talk among the areas of focus is within the canon of production (66.7%). This is followed by "others" (88.9%), media organization and self and self life (55.6%), and non-media institutional relationships (33.3%).

- The greatest percentage of much talk among the empowerment domains is the production domain (88.9%). This is followed by the personal and societal domains (77.8%).

- The greatest percentage of much talk (66.7%) occurs at two locations: the intersection of the row of the canon of production and the column of the production domain, and the intersection of the row of "others" and the column of the personal domain.

- The least percentage of much talk (0.0%) occurs at four locations: the intersection of the row of the canon of production and the column of the societal domain, the row of non-media institutional relationships and the columns of the production and personal domains, and the row of self and self life and the column of the societal domain.

Figure 22 illustrates the interior of Table 7.
Percentage With Much Talk: Cognition. Table 8 provides the percentage of respondents judged as placing more than a moderate amount of emphasis in only the 15 cognition subcells (cognition) of the chart. An analysis of Table 8 indicates the following patterns:

- The greatest percentage of much talk judged as cognition among the areas of focus is within "others" (77.8%). This is followed by the rows of canon of production and self and self life (55.6%), media organization (44.4%), and non-media institutional relationships (33.3%).

- The greatest percentage of much talk judged as cognition among the empowerment domains are the production and personal domains (88.9%). This is followed by the societal domain (77.8%).

- The greatest percentage of much talk judged as cognition (66.7%) occurs at the intersection of the row of "others" and the column of the personal domain.

- The least percentage of much talk judged as cognition (0.0%) occurs at four locations: the intersection of the row of the canon of production and the column of the societal domain, the row of non-media institutional relationships and the columns of the production and personal domains, and the row of self and self life and the column of the societal domain.

Figure 23 illustrates the interior of Table 8.

Percentage With Much Talk: Action. Table 9 provides the percentage of respondents judged as placing more than a moderate amount of emphasis in only the 15 action subcells of the chart. An analysis of Table 9 indicates the following patterns:
• The only location reporting much talk judged as action is the cell located at the intersection of the row of the canon of production and the column of the production domain (33.3%). All other areas of focus and empowerment domains indicate that 0.0% of respondents placed a large amount of emphasis judged as cognition in these locations.

Figure 24 illustrates the interior of Table 9.

**Percentage With Much Talk: Comparisons.** Figure 25 illustrates the comparison of the bottom margins of Tables 7, 8, and 9. This indicates the percentages of respondents judged as placing more than a moderate amount of emphasis in cells within the columns of the Domains of Empowerment.

Figure 26 illustrates the comparison of the right margins of Tables 7, 8, and 9. This indicates the percentages of respondents judged as placing more than a moderate amount of emphasis in cells within the rows of the areas of focus.

These tables and charts present an overall picture of the amount of talk within the video empowerment chart, as described by respondents during their interviews, and coded by the study's primary researcher. The significance of the results as they address this study's research questions are briefly explored below; they are discussed in greater depth in chapter 5.
Table 7:

Percentage of Respondents With Much Talk:
Overall (Cognition + Action)
(N = 9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Societal</th>
<th>Entire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canon</td>
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<td>33.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Media</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
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<td>55.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8:

Percentage of Respondents With Much Talk:
Cognition Only
(N = 9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Societal</th>
<th>Entire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canon</td>
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<td>Media</td>
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<td>Self</td>
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<td>88.9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 9:

Percentage of Respondents With Much Talk:
Action Only
(N = 9)

<table>
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<th>Societal</th>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Media</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
Figure 22:
Percentage of Respondents with Much Talk:
Overall (Cognition + Action)
Figure 23:
Percentage of Respondents with Much Talk:
Cognition Only
Figure 24:
Percentage of Respondents with Much Talk: Action Only
Figure 25:
Comparison of Percentages of Respondents with Much Talk: Domains of Empowerment
Figure 26:
Comparison of Percentages of Respondents with Much Talk: Areas of Focus
Discussion of Quantitative Data

This study focuses on a multilevel test of empowerment. As discussed in chapters 1 and 2 and reiterated earlier in this chapter, it first examines whether producers provide any evidence of cognition or reflection regarding the specific elements within the rows of the areas of focus. These provide indicators of empowerment within the domains specified by the columns of the empowerment domains. Reflection is considered a more refined version of cognition. Second, the study tests for action, investigating whether the cognitions led to any behavior to integrate the new awareness. And third, this study tests for action related to societal change, considered to be the highest level of empowerment action, and indicated by the column of the societal domain.

In this way, this study tests the public access empowerment vision: video training that results in media literacy, media demystification, and empowerment. The study specifically investigates whether respondents experience a new awareness of self, others, and society, and acted upon these awarenesses. As described throughout this study, the following formula represents the access vision:

media literacy \rightarrow media demystification = empowerment (awareness of self, others, and society; action to change relationships in these areas)
Accordingly, this section focuses on an overview of the quantitative coding results as they relate to the research questions discussed previously. The deductive results presented below are extracted at an abstraction level above the descriptive results in the preceding sections. Here, the purpose is to extract the patterns that link the quantitative data; these findings provide insights to patterns explored as inductive themes discussed in depth in chapter 5.

Listed below are findings based on the results of coding and analysis; a discussion of each follows.

1. Media literacy— "reading" and/or "writing" of media programs— is an outcome of the public access experience for all the producers taking part in this study.

2. Media demystification— awareness and/or utilization of media structure and influence— is an outcome of the public access experience for many of the producers taking part in this study.

3. A new awareness of self is an outcome of the public access experience for some of the respondents.

4. A new awareness of others— including members of the viewing audience, workmates, crewmates, and distant "others"— is an outcome of the public access experience for most of the study producers.

5. Talk judged as cognition occurs more often than talk judged as action.

6. The greatest talk judged as cognition across the entire chart occurs within two cells: (1) the intersection of the personal domain and the area of "others"; and (2) the intersection of the personal domain and the area of self and self life. These are followed closely by the talk related to production.
7. The greatest amount of talk about action is related to production.

8. The greatest amount of talk within the empowerment domains occurs in the column of the production domain; this is followed by the personal domain of empowerment and, finally, the societal domain of empowerment.

9. Talk about action is appreciably less than talk about cognition within the societal domain.

**Media Literacy**

The data indicate that media literacy—the "reading" and/or "writing" of television programs—is an outcome of the public access experience for all the producers taking part in this study. This is supported by the quantitative data discussed below.

**Media Literacy Within the Canon of Production.** The finding of media literacy is supported by the large amount of talk within the canon of production; this row represents the elements described by public access and media education as "media literacy."

The canon of production reflects the greatest amount of talk for both overall (cognition + action) cells (3.1, Table 1) and action subcells of any of the areas of focus (1.2, Table 3). The canon of production is second in ratings among the areas of focus across cognition subcells (1.9, Table 2). The average ratings for the areas of focus (Tables 1, 2, and 3) are compared in Figure 16.
In particular, the cell at the intersection of the row of the canon of production and the column of the production domain reflects the greatest amount of talk across the entire empowerment chart (4.7, Table 1; illustrated in Figure 12). The action subcell in this cell also contains the greatest amount of talk of any action subcell across the entire chart (2.1, Table 3; illustrated in Figure 14).

Within this cell, the action subcell adds significantly to the overall (cognition + action) average rating for the cell (4.7, Table 1); the cognition rating is a close third among cognition subcells (2.6, Table 2; illustrated in Figure 13).

This action subcell at the intersection of the row of the canon of production and the column of the production domain is the only action subcell on the entire chart to have been judged to contain a high number of actions by respondents (33%, Table 9 and accompanying Figure 24). These data indicate that the only area in which respondents described a high number of actions of any kind is within production.

**Media Literacy Within the Production Domain.** The column of the production domain reflects the greatest amount of talk overall (cognition + action) among the columns of the empowerment domain (2.4, Table 1).
The column of the production domain shares the greatest amount of talk judged as cognition (1.7, Table 2).

The greatest amount of talk judged as action among the empowerment domains is found in the production domain (0.7, Table 3).

The column of the production domain reflects the greatest amount of talk within overall (cognition + action) cells (2.4, Table 1) and action subcells (0.7, Table 3).

The empowerment domains within Tables 1, 2, and 3 are compared in Figure 15.

**Summary of Media Literacy.** These quantitative indicators confirm that the respondents are aware of and, to a lesser degree, act upon elements of media literacy, and that this combined awareness and action is the strongest area to emerge numerically from the data. The implications of these findings are addressed later in this chapter; chapter 5 explores the subtleties of media literacy and its relationship with other patterns in the data.

**Media Demystification**

The data indicate that media demystification—awareness and/or utilization of media structure and influence—is an outcome of the public access experience
for many of the producers taking part in this study. However, media demystification is not as strong an outcome as the media literacy described above; this is supported by the data presented below.

**Media Demystification Within Media Organization and Non-media Institutional Relationships.** The finding of media demystification is supported by the amount of talk within the rows of media organization and non-media institutional relationships. These rows of the areas of focus represent the elements of media demystification as set forth by media education and discussed in chapters 1 and 2.

The row of media organization is rated third in amount of overall (cognition + action) talk (2.1, Table 1), below the canon of production and "others." The row of non-media institutional relationships is the lowest of the areas of focus (1.0, Table 1).

The data indicate that media demystification is more of a cognitive awareness than an implemented action. Overall (cognition + action), the amount of talk judged as cognition within the rows of media organization (1.7, Table 2) and non-media institutional relationships (0.8, Table 2) is greater than the amount of talk judged as action (0.5 and 0.2, respectively, Table 3). A comparison of the
average ratings of the cognition and subcells of the areas of focus (Tables 2 and 3) is illustrated in Figure 16.

**Summary of Media Demystification.** The figures above indicate that respondents are aware of and, to a lesser degree, act upon the elements of media demystification as presented by media education and reflected in the empowerment chart. The significance of these findings is addressed later in this chapter; a closer investigation of the element of media demystification is presented within the discussion of themes in chapter 5.

**Awareness of Self**

The data indicate that a new awareness of self, as discussed in chapters 1 and 2, is an outcome of the public access experience for some of the respondents. This is supported in part by the amount of talk overall (cognition + action) in the row of self and self life (1.6, Table 1—the second lowest of the rows of the areas of focus), as well as the amount of talk overall (cognition + action) within the column of the personal domain (2.2, Table 1—a close second to the column of the production domain).

Evidence of a new awareness of self is also provided by data indicating that some of the greatest amount of talk judged as cognition occurs at the intersection of the row
of self and the column of the personal domain (2.7, Table 2).² Consistently, the greatest amount of talk within the row of self and self life was at the row's intersection with the column of the personal domain. This held true for talk overall (cognition + action) (3.1, Table 1), talk about cognition (2.7, Table 2), and talk about action (0.4, Table 3).

The preponderance of talk at this intersection point within self and self life was also true for the percentage of respondents judged as talking at all about matters overall (cognition + action) (100%, Table 4), talking at all about cognition (100%, Table 5), and talking at all about action (44%, Table 6).

This intersection point also dominated the row of self and self life when looking at the percentage of respondents with a great deal of talk overall (cognition + action) (55.6%, Table 7), and talking judged as cognition (55.6%, Table 8). There was no heavy emphasis on talk judged as action at this intersection (0.0%, Table 9).

Given the entire row of self and self life, awareness of self primarily takes the form of cognition (1.3, Table 2) rather than action (0.3, Table 3).

² The cognition subcell at the intersection of the row of "others" and the column of the personal domain shared this average rating of 2.7 (Table 1).
These data indicate that some respondents do experience and, to a lesser degree, act on a new awareness of themselves and those close to them as a result of their public access participation. The implications of these findings are addressed later in this chapter; a more detailed look is provided in chapter 5.

**Awareness of Others**

The data indicate that a new awareness of others—including members of the viewing audience, workmates, crewmates, and distant "others"—is an outcome of the public access experience for most of the study producers. This is supported by the large amount of talk overall (cognition + action) within the row of "others" (2.9, Table 1), the second highest row of the areas of focus.

This new awareness of others is also supported by the fact that the row of "others" contains the most amount of talk of the areas of focus among the cognitive subcells (2.3, Table 2). This awareness is primarily cognitive; the average amount of talk about action within the row of "others" is second among the areas of focus (0.6, Table 3).

However, the awareness of others indicated by the data also stands out in other ways. "Others" leads among the rows of the areas of focus when looking at the percentage of respondents judged to place a high emphasis on talk in
both overall (cognition + action) cells (88.9%, Table 7; illustrated in Figure 22) and in cognition subcells (77.8%, Table 8; illustrated in Figure 23).

These data indicate that most respondents experience and, to a lesser degree act upon, a new awareness of others as a result of their public access experience. While the significance of these findings are addressed later in this chapter, a more detailed investigation is explored in chapter 5.

Cognition Versus Action

The data indicate that cognition occurs more often than action for the producers in this study. This is supported by the fact that the average ratings for cognition subcells (Table 2) are higher than the average ratings for action subcells (Table 3) within the same cell. The only exception to this is the cell at the intersection of the row of non-media and the column of the personal domain; here the amount of talk judged as action was the same as the amount of talk judged as cognition (0.2, Tables 2 and 3).

3 Figure 11 compares the cognition and action subcells of the domains of empowerment; Figure 12 compares the cognition and action subcells of the areas of focus. Both of these figures also include a comparison of overall (cognition + action) cells, found in Table 1.
The data above illustrate the greater emphasis placed by respondents on cognition over action throughout the chart. The significance of this is addressed later in this chapter and explored more fully in chapter 5.

Cognition's Preponderance

The data indicate that the greatest amount of talk related to cognition across the entire chart occurs within two cells of the chart: (1) the intersection of the personal domain and the area of "others," and (2) the intersection of the personal domain and the area of self and self life. These are followed closely by the talk related to production.

This finding is supported by the average ratings for the amount of talk within these cognition subcells. The greatest amount of talk judged as cognition occurs within the cognition subcells (1) at the intersection of the column of the personal domain and the row of self and self life (2.7, Table 2) and (2) at the intersection of the column of the personal domain and the row of "others" (2.7, Table 2).

The large amount of talk in these areas are followed closely by talk about production, as evidenced by the cognition subcell at the intersection of the row of the
canon of production and the column of the production domain (2.6, Table 2).

Both the production domain and the personal domain were judged to contain the same amount of talk related to cognition (1.7, Table 2).

The specifics regarding these findings are reported above under "Awareness of Self," "Awareness of Others," and "Media Literacy."

**Action's Preponderance**

The data indicate that the greatest amount of talk judged as action is related to production. This is supported by the ratings and percentages found in the action subcell at the intersection of the row of the canon of production and the column of the production domain. This subcell consistently scored highest among all other action subcells in average ratings (2.1, Table 3), percentage of respondents with any talk related to action (100%, Table 6), and percentage of respondents with a great deal of talk (33.3%, Table 9).*

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* The action subcells of Table 3 are illustrated in Figure 10; Table 6 in Figure 15; and Table 9 in Figure 20. The action subcells of Table 3 are compared with overall (cognition + action) cells and cognition subcells in Figures 11 and 12; the action subcells of Table 6 are compared with overall cells and cognition subcells in Figures 16 and 17; and the action subcells of Table 9 are compared with overall cells and cognition subcells in Figures 21 and 22.
The specifics regarding this finding are reported above in the discussion regarding media literacy.

**Amount of Talk Within Empowerment Domains**

The data indicate that the greatest amount of talk within the empowerment domains occurs in the column of the production domain (2.4, Table 1), followed by the personal domain of empowerment (2.2, Table 1), and finally, the societal domain of empowerment (1.9, Table 1).

A comparison of the average ratings indicates that the column of the production domain reflects the greatest amount of talk within the overall (cognition + action) cells (2.4, Table 1) and the action subcells (0.7, Table 3); it matches the column of the personal domain in cognition subcells (1.7, Table 2).\(^5\)

The column of the personal domain follows the production domain in both overall (cognition + action) cells (2.2) and action subcells (0.5).

The least amount of talk among the empowerment domains occurs within the societal domain. This is indicated by the average ratings within the overall (cognition + action)

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\(^5\) The average ratings overall (cognition + action) for the empowerment domains are found in Table 1; these ratings are compared with the cognition (Table 2) and action (Table 3) ratings in Figure 11.
cells (1.9, Table 1), the cognition subcells (1.5, Table 2), and the action subcells (0.4, Table 3).

In fact, the column of the societal domain is lowest among the columns of the empowerment domains in almost every comparison: average ratings (Tables 1, 2, and 3), percentage of respondents judged as placing any talk judged as action (Table 6), and percentage of respondents judged as having a great deal of talk judged as cognition and action (Tables 8 and 9). In the comparisons not mentioned here, the societal domain tied the lowest score among the columns of the empowerment domains (Tables 4, 5, and 7).

The significance of these findings is addressed later in this chapter; the subtleties at play within the empowerment domains and their relationships with other patterns in the data are explored in chapter 5.

**Action Less Than Cognition in Societal Domain**

The data indicate that, for the respondents, talk about action is significantly less than talk about cognition within the societal domain.

This is supported by comparing the average ratings for the entire societal domain within the cognition subcells (higher with 1.5, Table 2) and the action subcells (lower with 0.4, Table 3).6

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6 The average ratings for the entire societal domain (continued...)
All of the respondents were judged as having some talk within the cognition subcells for the column of the societal domain (100%, Table 5). Slightly fewer respondents were judged as having some talk within the action subcells (88.9%, Table 6).\footnote{The percentages of respondents with any talk across the entire societal domain within overall cells (Table 4), cognition subcells (Table 5) and action subcells (Table 6) are compared in Figure 16.}

Further, while 77.8\% of the respondents were judged as having more than a great deal of talk within the cognition subcells of the column of the societal domain (Table 8), none were judged as having a great deal of talk related to action (0.0\%, Table 9).\footnote{The percentages of respondents with a great deal of talk across the entire societal domain within overall cells (Table 7), cognition subcells (Table 8) and action subcells (Table 9) are compared in Figure 16.}

These figures indicate that action is found less often than cognition within the societal domain of empowerment. The significance of this finding is addressed below; it is discussed in depth in chapter 5.
Summary of the Deductive Data Analysis

The quantitative findings presented above provide a useful overview of the data, particularly as they reflect the amount of talk within the video empowerment chart.

These findings address the research questions directing this study: (1) Do producers of public access programs have an awareness of the media's structure and operation, including a sense of the codes of television? (2) Does this awareness of media's structure, operation, and codes assist producers in defining a sense of self, others, and society? (3) Do producers take action to implement these awarenesses? and (4) Do producers identify and change relationships, particularly within the societal realm?

The deductive analysis throughout this chapter allows a picture of initial findings to emerge; the findings can be summarized as follows:

1. Media literacy is an outcome of the public access experience for all the producers taking part in this study. Media demystification is an outcome for many, but not all.

2. A new awareness of self is an outcome of the public access experience for some of the respondents; most also experience a new awareness of others. There is far less societal-related awareness, although there is some.

3. For the producers in this study, awareness in the form of cognition and/or reflection occurs more often than action. This is particularly the case within the societal realm.
4. Producers in this study operate more within the area of production than the personal realm; they operate within the societal realm least of all.

This chapter has analyzed the data deductively and extrapolated patterns emerging from the framework provided by the video empowerment chart. These patterns offer some insight into the inductive analysis provided in chapter 5.
CHAPTER V
INDUCTIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Overview

As stated previously, the focus of this dissertation is to test the implementation and viability of the public access vision of empowerment through media demystification and media literacy that is said to result from video production practice.

Specifically, the purpose of this study is to test the public access vision of empowerment as explicated in the video empowerment chart (Figure 1): to see (1) if producers of public access programs have an awareness of the media's structure and operation, including a sense of the codes of television; (2) if this awareness of the media's structure, operation, and codes assists producers in defining a sense of self, others, and society; (3) if producers take action to implement these awarenesses; and (4) if producers identify and change relationships, particularly within the societal realm.

Chapter 4 focused on a deductive analysis of the study data; this chapter will move beyond that chapter's focus on the amount of talk and will concentrate inductively on the experiences of the producers participating in this study.
This chapter will use the deductive sensitizing concepts discussed in chapter 3 and will integrate the findings discovered through the quantitative overview of the data presented in chapter 4.

**Summary of Deductive Findings**

By utilizing the video empowerment chart, chapter 4 employed the vision road map framework discussed in chapter 3. The results of the coding were presented in a quantitative manner to gain a perspective of the amount of talk judged to be taking place within the confines of the video empowerment chart.

As stated in chapter 4, the results of the deductive analysis are as follows:

1. Media literacy is an outcome of the public access experience for all the producers taking part in this study. Media demystification is an outcome for many, but not all.

2. A new awareness of self is an outcome of the public access experience for some of the respondents; most also experience a new awareness of others. There is far less societal-related awareness, although there is some.

3. For the producers in this study, awareness in the form of cognition and/or reflection occurs more often than action. This is particularly the case within the societal realm.

4. Producers in this study operate more within the area of production than the personal realm; they operate within the societal realm least of all.

These deductive results will be addressed within the inductive analysis of this chapter.
PRESENTATION OF QUALITATIVE RESULTS

As discussed in chapter 3, the inductive analysis used in this chapter employs the framework of the life path, as informed primarily by Sense-Making. Guided by the sensitizing concepts of media literacy, media demystification, and empowerment, the following six themes have been identified as particularly relevant to this study:

1. Media Savvy: An awareness and utilization of production codes, equipment, and organizational structures. The ability to evaluate programs and come to conclusions regarding the content and technical aspects of programs.

2. It's Personal: The casting of access experiences in personal terms; these internal linkings may be intellectual, emotional, etc.

3. Tolerance: An understanding and/or acceptance of the differences of others—personal or ideological.

4. Community: The sense of belonging to a cohesive group of individuals, usually with a common purpose.

5. Making a Difference: The sense that an individual's/group's actions are important, and that change at the societal level can be affected.

6. Alternative Visions of Access: Visions of public access expressed by producers were not necessarily related to the vision of public access informing this study.

The discussion of these themes below is organized according to the public access vision framework discussed in chapters 1 and 3, which guided the organization of the quantitative analysis in chapter 4:

media literacy ----> media demystification = empowerment (awareness of self, others, and society; action to change relationships in these areas)
Accordingly, the order in which themes will be discussed throughout the remainder of this chapter is the same as that in which they are listed above.

The discussion will draw from the individual interviews coded and analyzed in chapter 4; responses from the group interviews will also be included.¹

1. Media Savvy

The data indicate that a major learning outcome for all producers in this study is a highly refined sense of media savvy, defined as an awareness and utilization of production codes, equipment, and organizational structures. Media savvy also refers to the ability to evaluate programs and come to conclusions regarding the content and technical aspects of programs.

Media savvy is related to the sensitizing concepts of media literacy and media demystification presented by the media education literature and discussed in chapters 1 and 2. The deductive analysis in chapter 4 concluded that media literacy was an outcome of the access experience for all of the producers in this study; media demystification was an outcome for many, but not all. This section will focus on an inductive analysis of the rich interaction operating within the broader theme of media savvy.

¹ For clarity in their written form, the respondents' vocalized pauses (e.g., "umm," "you know") have been deleted from the data presented in this chapter.
Within media savvy there are four major organizing subthemes, which reflect the variety of aspects in which respondents referred to media:

- **Program media savvy**: refers to the programs viewed on or created for television
- **Technical media savvy**: refers to the technical aspects used to create programs on television
- **Symbolic media savvy**: refers to the symbolic codes used within television programs
- **System media savvy**: refers to the structures of the media industry and related non-media organizations

The subthemes of program, technical, and symbolic media savvy have similarities to the media education goal of media literacy: assisting viewers to evaluate the content and intent of television programs, and the meanings found within these programs.

System media savvy parallels the media education goal of media demystification: making apparent the workings of the media as a system by itself and within society.

The discussion of media savvy concludes with a look at the struggles against media savvy.

**Program Media Savvy**

Program media savvy focuses on program content; it refers to (1) awareness and action by producers regarding various types of programs; (2) awareness and action by producers regarding the availability or unavailability of program types across the entire media spectrum; and (3)
awareness and action by producers regarding an ability to evaluate the content and/or (un)availability of these programs. Program media savvy relates to a lower level of media literacy as presented by the media education literature and reflected in the video empowerment chart. Program media savvy is centered primarily in the chart row of the canon of production, but also includes a few elements of the row of media organization.

The data indicate that most respondents expressed an awareness of the various types of programs found on the mainstream media and public access television. Informants also evaluated the content and (un)availability of diverse programming at the mainstream and public access levels.

Meredith and Daniel provide examples of program media savvy:

Meredith: ... I would conclude that although we think that we have a lot of variety on TV and a lot of choices, when you really look at it all that variety, so-called variety and choices pretty much is the same thing just in different packages ... (b4P1a)
[But] that some of the monotony that they might see on other channels is not the whole universe.... (b4P4a)

Daniel indicates a cognitive and self-reflective awareness of media programs:

Daniel: ... Every time we turn around we put a TV in front of us. Sometimes we look at it without a lot of these blinders on. We don’t know what exactly is going on behind the scenes and I’ve always been one that wants to know what’s happening. When things are produced, how does it all get together? Why is it we’re watching certain shows and not other shows and this is constantly what we’re seeing. And I think a better understanding of what video is about and what it
does and the production ideas make it easier to understand why we're seeing all these sitcoms every night when we go home, that are driving us nuts. And how the talk shows are coming in so heavy. I think we -- I can better understand some of them, the philosophy behind them now. But I've done some of this where I've helped with some of these talk shows or sitcom type productions, learn a little bit more of what the real value is of some of this TV. (b6P8a)

In the instances cited above, Daniel and Meredith are describing program-related facets of the mainstream media and public access. They exemplify a common perspective among the producers: that the mainstream media fails to provide a variety of programs and information, and that public access offers an array of widely diverse, often controversial programs.

Daniel and Meredith exemplify how program media savvy is primarily cognitive; Daniel shows how, at times, it is reflective. For the most part, however, program media savvy is not action-oriented. Those times when there is implementation within program media savvy also relate primarily to other subthemes within media savvy, or relate predominantly to other themes altogether.

Thea provides such an example. She describes how she purposely includes elements in her programs because they are not included in mainstream television:

Thea: In some ways yeah, I'd say that when I looked at television and I saw that some things weren't being answered or looked at there I tried to incorporate things that -- put that into my productions ... (b3P4a)
Although Thea provides an example of program media savvy related to action, she is not only indicating an implementation of awareness, she is doing so with a desire to fill a gap left by mainstream programs. As such, Thea's action is an attempt to address power relationships within the television industry, related more to the theme of making a difference discussed later in this chapter. Thea is also describing her attempt to address these power relationships within her program, related to a technical construction of her program, and fitting within technical media savvy, addressed below.

**Technical Media Savvy**

Technical media savvy refers to the ability to identify and/or integrate the manner in which programs are constructed: processes, equipment, etc. Respondents also are able to evaluate and/or integrate the techniques and processes involved in the construction of television programs.

A technical awareness of program construction and implementation of this awareness is prevalent throughout the data.\(^2\) Technical media savvy most closely parallels the

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\(^2\) While investigating the technical subtheme, particular attention was focused on any possible "stacking" of the topic by the protocol design. Within the protocol, respondents were asked for only one incident that might be construed as technical: a time when they looked at television "differently" (protocol question B3).
higher-level concepts of media literacy as defined within the media education literature discussed in chapters 1 and 2.

As discussed in chapter 4, the data support the notion that media literacy is a major learning outcome on the part of the producers in this study. Accordingly, among the media savvy subthemes, technical media savvy is most closely associated with the amount of talk within the most dynamic of the chart cell intersections described in chapter 4: the row of the canon of production and the column of the production domain.

The profusion of talk within this aspect may be explained in part by the fact that, as producers and crew members, the respondents are constantly engaged in an effort to improve their productions as well as their contributions to other shows, and therefore are continually evaluating the technical elements within programs with which they are associated. Denise provides such an example:

Denise: I don't think anything about my show held me back. I saw a lot of things that I didn't want, like criticism, like I felt my microphone showed and dumb things but I don't see anything of my show holding me back. I really don't. (b7P5a)

Meredith provides another example of evaluation as she discusses ways she might have improved a program:

Meredith: ... It could be better casting. Maybe I used the wrong person. The lighting could have been better or maybe the whole scene could have been shot in a different location. The blocking could have been different or the audio -- sometimes there is a slight problem with the
audio, that has nothing to do with the fact that it is on a low-powered station or coming cross through that facility. Sometimes it has to do with the things going on right at the production point. So sometimes the audio could be improved. Audio I find is the most challenging bit concerning putting something really of high quality on the air. (b1P4a)

Various aspects within technical media savvy emerge through the data, and are explored in turn below:

- **Technical media savvy as seams-shattering**: refers to the ability to deconstruct television programs.

- **Technical media savvy as routine**: refers to the internalization of the technical process by producers.

- **Technical media savvy as survival skill**: refers to the internalization of the technical process as vital within a production context.

**Technical Media Savvy as Seams-Shattering.** The discussion in chapter 2 defines media literacy as the ability to "read" and "write" the audio/video production and symbolic codes of television and the ability to evaluate programs. The goal of this literacy is, in part, to allow viewers to recognize that television programs are constructions of reality and not reality itself. This is accomplished by teaching "readers" how to deconstruct television programs to their component elements, and to construct programs as the "writers" with their own goals and objectives in mind.

The deconstruction of television programs is the essence of media literacy; "technical media savvy as seams-shattering" is related to this element of media literacy.
The media education literature discussed in chapter 2 posits that the "reality" presented by mainstream television seems "natural." This facade of normalcy is said to require enormous effort to construct on the part of program producers; programs are often judged to be more successful the more natural a program appears. Media education and public access assert that when people begin to produce their own programs, they see at once the effort required to create this "seamless" world, because they often are attempting to create similarly "seamless" realities.3

These new video "writers" are said to have their "reading" of television changed forever because they are now able to deconstruct programs and analyze the techniques that are used to create the "naturalness" of television.

The data support these media education concepts. All the producers interviewed for this study began to look at television in a different light after their access training; in effect, they developed an ability to deconstruct, or "shatter the seams" of, the television reality.

Thea, an access dropout, provides an example of seams-shattering. In her case, shattering the seams of television

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3 The synopsis of media education draws from the historical perspectives provided by Sholle and Denski (1993, 1994) and Halloran and Jones (1984). The discussion of public access perspectives on media literacy is provided primarily by Hobbs (1994) and Stein (1991). These are discussed in depth in chapter 2.
has helped her develop an "eye" for media; she also acts on this awareness in certain circumstances:

Thea: ... I think a lot of my influences came within my first year of public access and it was when I was taking -- when I was starting to work on other people's productions and seeing what they were doing in the studio and seeing the different camera angles and movements and working in the control room.

I started getting interested in watching TV and seeing how they did things, watching camera angles, watching edits, that sort of thing. How smooth it went, how choppy, you know. Talk shows on ACTV, I would compare them with talk shows on regular television and things like that, or even when I went to the regular movie theaters. I still do this. I'll get up and if they don't have it focused on both sides of the screen I'll immediately go to the front office and ask them to focus it because it will drive me crazy, and I've never done that before.

I guess it helped me develop an eye even if it is not as professional as those people who work in television. It just helped me appreciate it and develop an eye for some things. (B3)

Noreen, a mid-timer, also exemplifies seams-shattering. For her, this includes the realization that television programs are approached with set schedules and goals; she also integrates this realization in the construction of her own programs:

Noreen: ... To do a show you have to look at things in different terms. ... [Y]ou have to look at setting times. You have to look at both being clear in your goal, on stating what your TV show wants to accomplish and I look at it like being you're good speakers that you say at the beginning what you're gonna say, then you say it and then you wrap up by telling people what they just

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"Short-timer," "long-timer," "mid-timer," and "dropout" refer to the length or condition of access experience associated with the respondent categories discussed in chapter 3.
heard. And that when you do my kind of shows is you really enforce it. You give a phone number, you give an address, you give reference material. But if you’re gonna educate someone on a topic then you have to do it a whole different way or a whole bunch of different ways. (B6)

In her description of "looking at things in different terms," Noreen is deconstructing the seemingly "natural" aspects of a video program by identifying some of the separate tasks and goals involved in program construction. Her experience coincides with the goals of media literacy within media education; these emphasize helping viewers identify video programs not as "seamless" reflections of reality, but as representations of a particular producer’s perspective, following specific objectives.

Tom, the long timer quoted previously in chapter 3, also illustrates seams-shattering. Like Noreen, he recognizes that programs have predetermined goals, and he integrates these goals into his program (b4P7a).

Thea, Noreen, and Tom all indicate an awareness that television programs are made, not born. This deconstructs the seemingly natural television program, breaking the program into component elements available for critique.

For Noreen and Tom, an essential first step is to decide on the goals and objectives of the program. This helps them concentrate on the program’s other elements. Alfred exemplifies the process involved in seams-shattering deconstruction through the very process of constructing a
program. In Alfred’s case, he now organizes his production by proceeding one step at a time:

Alfred: ... It made me realize I need to formulate a new plan for doing it, which I did. So now I’m doing things a different way....

My new plan is to take one step per time out. Every time I go to do something I just do one thing. So like today I’ll do my profiles, my introductions, my voice-overs, anything I had to do that way. Tomorrow I’ll do my insert editing. The next day I’ll do my graphics and I’ll have my whole show done in a step program or a step method of trying to get it done....

[That way], I don’t have to worry about messing nothing else up. If I got it all down -- if I got those parts down right I don’t have to worry about messing anything else up. I take the time to do those things one thing at the time. I can concentrate on them and get them done better, to get them done a whole lot better. I even learned how to work with that Amiga [computer] a little better. I know that I used it and made some mistakes in that use, but I was able to finish my program that gave me the headache in the first place.... (b2P4a)

As an aspect of the technical media savvy subtheme, seams-shattering contributes to an understanding of the quantitative weight given to the media literacy areas of the video empowerment chart discussed in chapter 4. Although the producers talked at length about matters judged to be cognition, most talk judged as action took place within media literacy. Overall, media literacy was the most talked-about area across the chart.

Seams-shattering helps show why--it is here that all the elements of empowerment are manifest: cognition, reflection, and action. Producers learn to deconstruct television programs as they work on the construction of
programs. They then reflect on this awareness as it relates to their own performance and/or program. They then consciously apply what they have learned to their next program. In so doing, they are acting on awarenesses related to both the construction and the deconstruction of television programs.

The actions within seams-shattering occasionally extend into societal action. Earlier in this chapter, Thea described her attempts to include elements in her productions that were not being looked at on mainstream television (b3P4a). Tom also uses his program to address societal issues (b4Pla). Both Thea and Tom exemplify the action within the technical media savvy subtheme of seams-shattering; each is attempting to address inequities in society through his or her program.

The cases of Noreen, Tom, and Alfred demonstrate an awareness of the approaches necessary to produce a program. Not only are they aware of these approaches, but they have reflected on the procedures with respect to their own programs. They then integrated these procedures into their own production processes. Thus they have exemplified the manner by which cognition, reflection, and action are involved in seams-shattering deconstruction through the very process of constructing a program.

Seams-shattering contains an added dimension—"can't turn it off," defined as an inability by producers to stop
deconstructing video programs. The data indicate that a few producers find it difficult to "turn off" the seams-shattering mindset. Daniel, a long-time producer, talks about going to the movies and laughing at the visible "seams"; in his case, it sometimes interferes with enjoying the film.

Daniel: There are a lot of times it would be nice just to be able to watch a movie for the fun of watching the movie. I find myself a lot times drifting off and doing the same thing, not consciously listening to or watching it and just go mechanically through the ideas of what went through the process that particular piece of video or film. The Nightmare Before Christmas -- I watched that and then I sat there and I thought more technically how the guy got the people to move than I was the story content. It's [laughing] and then you want to go back in and pay $5 to watch the movie again. It may not be all that bad for the guy at the ticket booth. Sometimes you come out of a movie you say "Man that was great. They really worked those puppets good." "What was the story about?" "Oh, oh" [laughing]. (b3P3a)

Charlie, a relative newcomer, also has difficulty "turning off" the seams-shattering; in her case, she finds herself looking at the world as material for inclusion in her next video production.

Charlie: I think it all relates to my life because my life is so ingrained in it now.... I'm always thinking in terms of when we're out and we see something and it's like "Oh, I should videotape that and put it on the program schedule," or "That'd be a nice background for this video," or whatever. I'm always thinking more in terms of what I see around me and how I could best to use it with the public access station. (b5P7a)
"Can't turn it off" points to the impact of the seams-shattering skills on the daily lives of some of the producers. Additional investigation of the personal impacts of the access experience is presented later in this chapter.

**Technical Media Savvy as Routine.** The data indicate that the day-to-day skills and perceptions involved in creating video programs are internalized by all producers—to the point that they become second nature. All producers consistently referred matter-of-factly to production terms, techniques, and equipment throughout their interviews; this is a trait commonly found among professional video specialists.

While seams-shattering involves the foregrounding of the general processes by which a program is constructed, the technical as routine refers to the backgrounding of the more detailed rote processes of program production, and the theories underlying these processes. Both seams-shattering and technical media savvy as routine are evidenced by all producers.

Thea provides an example of the routinization of the technical: here she describes an incident during work on her first program in public access:

Thea: He [the volunteer editor] wanted a more literal interpretation of the song than what I had in my film footage and what I wanted and [laughing] during this hour of editing I don't think we even got passed the black burst because he wouldn't put down what I wanted on for editing.
He said that doesn't make sense in that point. You can’t show a garden when they’re singing about a car and you can’t do this when they’re singing about that and you need more literal interpretation because people will be confused and I had an artist background -- I’m a visual artist, and we had a habit of not doing things as literal as sometimes other people would like. But I mean I wasn’t here to be literal [laughing].... (B2)

While Thea does make reference to the production process, her statement includes an assumption of an involved technical concept in editing ("black burst"), as well as an understanding of traditional editing practices. These more detailed technical concepts and practices remain in the background.

Foregrouding of the technical occurred primarily when producers were discussing challenging production situations; the foregrounding revealed even deeper assumptions regarding technical theory and procedures. These are discussed below.

The process of constructing a program seems much like learning the skills of riding a bicycle or driving a car: once grasped, they become as natural as breathing--and reflected upon about as often. The skill involves cognitive and action elements that are simply performed. In the same manner, the specific technical elements of producing a program become foregrounded only when necessary--for example, when facing a challenge such as learning how to use a new piece of equipment or a new technique.

This common acceptance of the production process is implied throughout the interviews as respondents casually
refer to production situations related to preproduction planning, shooting the program, and postproduction preparation of the program for cablecasting.

The acceptance of the technical as routine is not surprising, given the experience of these participants. Respondents in this study have completed one or more of the technical training workshops and have participated in the creation of video programs. Those informants who produce series programs have accepted a responsibility to submit programs on a regular basis—often weekly or monthly. Given this wealth of production experience, it is understandable that the video codes, conventions, processes, and equipment—as well as the actions necessary to utilize them—are information and skills that have become second nature to the respondents and are taken for granted by them.

The data indicate no real differences between long-term and more recent producers in the acceptance of the technical as routine. Both short-term and long-term producers usually discuss the technical aspects of a production only when it refers to a time they were challenged, or awakened to another way of approaching equipment or a technique.

Tom is indicative of how the technical has become deeply internalized among most producers, particularly those who have been producing for a number of years. He has been producing a show for years; his talk is much less about the specific technical manner in which he puts together a
program, and much more reflective about the content of the programs, or the reasons he creates the programs--which are usually to address societal problems he perceives.

Tom: ... some people who were not churched ... might see somebody in the choirs that they know and they might desire to maybe change their lives and become a church member or sing in the choir. This is basically what I believe that these types of things are for. It's for the unchurched because we definitely need a revival in the land. And in Columbus there's a lot of things going on now and if it doesn't change soon we're gonna be in some problems, serious problems.

I mean when you have children walking up just hitting people in the face for no reason and laughing about it, that's a problem. That is a serious problem. And then nobody doing anything about it. And I've watched programs on television where 17-year-olds say they can get away with whatever they want to get away with and nobody does anything about it until they're 18. TICO is full, you know.

And that's the reason why I like a lot of little programs that I do on A Nice Day. I'll go out and just shoot the children in their settings in what they're doing and how they're doing it and put it on. I shoot them playing their sandlot football games or sandlot basketball games, and let them know about ACTV and they get a chance to see it. And I get a word in edgewise now and then about the Lord [laughing]. (b4P1a)

However, when discussing a time period when the access facility was experiencing frustrating equipment breakdowns,

Tom was more focused on the technical:

Tom: ... But still, you still want everything to work right. You don't want to go down there and have a guest and the Chyron don't work. In other words you can't put any lower thirds of the guests' names or you can't put your post-credits on after the program, and you have to wait till the next time you come down there because the Chyron wasn't working or either -- I mean just you can only use one camera because the cords wasn't fixed. It was sent out and nobody brought them back.... (b2P6a)
Tom is demonstrating his integration of the technical through the use of jargon commonly used by professionals in the video field: "Chyron," "lower thirds," and "post-credits" are shorthand references to equipment, program elements, and production processes. His foregrounding of the technical relates to a time when he was challenged by equipment malfunctions; even at this time, he is assuming a large amount of technical theory and practice.

Noreen, a mid-timer, has worked on a number of shows; she repeatedly made casual references to lighting, audio, camera, switching, and editing decisions throughout her interview. These references require a theoretical and practical knowledge of the equipment and process involved. Even when Noreen specifically describes a technical process, she is still working from a base awareness of technical theory. Here she describes the complicated processes involved while trying to save a technically flawed program:

Noreen: I hated everything. I hated the idea especially that people just said why don't you dub what you have onto another tape. But we already had dubbed it from the tape we originally recorded on to this copy. Oh no, no we couldn't even use 8 mm. That was it too. At that time I taped it on 8 mm but they didn't have the high 8 equipment. So then we had to dub it onto half-inch and then had to do the half-inch to three-quarter so you already went down three generations and then if I would have taken that show and dubbed it again it would have gone to five and from half-inch to three-quarter looked really -- was beginning to look really bad. So I could just take what I had and dubbed it over. If I did the whole show over I would have to go from my high 8 to the three-quarter. But my friend and I are really good at labeling things and after we dubbed it onto the
half-inch we wrote down all the times of all the events we wanted on the half-inch tapes. So what we would have to do is go back to our high 8, play it all, mark it all what we wanted, be able to find it and then go back... You would have to start the whole project over. You couldn't just dub it. (b2P5a)

While Noreen's talk involves procedures and equipment, it is the assumed knowledge that is of interest here. She is demonstrating an extremely sophisticated understanding of deeply complex technical theories of video synchronizing signals, signal loss after multiple generation dubs, signal reproduction capabilities of differing videotape equipment, and compatibility of differing videotape formats.

Charlie, a short-timer, has turned in dozens of programs since her first one in 1992. More than any other producer, she focused on technical details while describing her experiences. As with Noreen, Charlie reveals many deeper assumptions of technical theory and practice even when she is foregrounding the technical. Here she describes solutions she found to some problems experienced during a production:

Charlie: ... In being the TD [technical director] you really need to be able to focus on several thing at once, especially if you're involving the TD in doing the Amiga operations too, because the Amiga operations for my show are there again a little bit more involved and difficult than your basic show. Just because I am more computer-oriented so I've made it a little bit more in what my capabilities and stuff are. So this one particular show, everything was going wrong and I was in running the camera and I found that I was trying to TD from sitting on the floor in the studio with a camera in my hand [laughing] and it just kind of came to a head where we said
well you finish up this — because we do the show in two halves, one band in one half and another band in the second half. And it is like well, we just get through this first half and then I’ll go in and TD the second half and put him on camera and it was kind of — It was really a revelation that it happened because then at that point I kind of switched thinking around and after being the TD for the second half I realized at that point that maybe I do want to be the TD instead of just the camera operator. Because that way I have more control, even more control over doing everything. And not only that, but I get to run all the cameras (laughing). I just tell them oh well zoom it this way or zoom it that way so it is kind of like I am running more than one camera at once only with my voice instead of my hands.... (B3)

Charlie is exhibiting an awareness and implementation of several assumed technical aspects of the production beyond the obvious she describes. She takes for granted the functions and operation of the Amiga graphics computer, the video switcher and video processing equipment in the control room, and the studio cameras, as well as the job responsibilities of the position of the technical director (TD).

Thea, Tom, Noreen, and Charlie demonstrate the assumptions of technical media savvy as routine on the part of all producers in this study. It is obvious that the producers are aware of and utilize basic production techniques as a matter of course.

The data indicate that the producers foreground that which they accept as second nature when working through specific technical challenges. Trent also provides an example of how aspects of the technical are taken for
granted, and the circumstances under which this aspect is foregrounded.

Trent came to public access with years of previous professional video experience. He focused most of his interview on aspects outside the technical, with occasional references to technical production that indicated an acceptance of technical elements as routine. However, at one point Trent became very focused on the technical. He was describing how he learned a new way of shooting a production while working on someone else's program:

Trent: ... the more I got myself behind the camera to shoot in one way, to shoot in another and then say wait a minute, if I focus here I can defocus this out and concentrate, or while I'm starting in a defocused way and coming in to focus I zoom even closer in on the project and wow, that's interesting, how to do that. Well, let me try this and the next thing I know I found myself who was in denial -- I started in the process not knowing I was starting in the process or coming out of the denial because then I just started working. Do this, do that. Try this, try that. And constantly hearing no, that's not it. No. Let's do it again.

And in that denial there was frustration and slowly as I kept working then the frustration started going away and then the denial just melted totally away. Because then I found myself in the process, in the work. And I was able to lose myself and get with the work.

It is a great -- I don't know what other photographers or videographers or cinematographers -- they get from looking into that eye, that lens, being able to look in and being able to confine, know what you want in your world and what you don't want. What you're able to do as far as distorting imagery and taking it out of focus and in focus are -- being able to make sure that the lighting is appropriate. The highlights of the whole aspect. It made me have more respect for the art, for taking it to higher heights for stretching.
They say that in theatre that an actor needs to get on and stretch into the part. Well, that comes with every aspect of life and I saw it in trying ... this is what I'm gonna film right here. This is what I have in my camera. This is what I'm viewing right now. It is in the viewfinder. I got it. This looks great. Wait a minute. I can tell just by glancing over at the monitor that the color is wrong in this angle. Let me enhance this a little bit. Let me take this down a little bit. Let me do this. And OK, the composition is right but what about the resolution. Do we have it -- oh yeah, that works, that works and in finding myself talking more about the process, the color, the angle, the -- I hope I'm making sense [laughing]. (b3P5a)

Trent, while discussing technical elements, reveals deeper assumptions of the nature of camera operation, technical components of the picture, aesthetic considerations, and the processes involved in studio shooting.

Trent also provides insight to the circumstances under which a foregrounding of the technical takes place. Trent's discussion of the technical coincides with a new technique that challenged his old way of looking at the world of video production; at such a time the technical was foregrounded.

Thea, Tom, Charlie, Noreen, and Trent all provide examples of how the technical elements involved in video production are accepted as routine by producers, and the circumstances under which they foreground that internalized knowledge.

**Technical Media Savvy as Survival Skill.** While not directly indicated in the interviews, an analysis of the
data presented above within technical media savvy suggests that the aspects of seams-shattering and the technical as routine may not be merely "nice" by-products of video training. Instead, these aspects actually may be important survival skills for producers within the access setting.

These aspects reveal a balancing act between foregrounding and backgrounding technical thought as appropriate. Seams-shattering involves a foregrounding of the technical; the technical as routine entails backgrounding the technical under standard production circumstances. The balance between the two seems to determine the successful outcome of the production; survival as a producer or crew member depends on this delicate balance between thought and habit.

The information and skills of seams-shattering seem to be necessary under certain circumstances for the successful completion of a program for cablecasting. For example, these can help break the seemingly overwhelming, immense task of producing a television program into manageable steps; evidence of this is provided above by Noreen (B6), Tom (b4P7a), and Alfred (b2P4a).

In addition, given the rapid pace with which productions often take place (particularly in a studio production) and the time constraints involved with equipment scheduling and usage, internalizing the technical skills
also seems to be necessary—at appropriate moments—for successful program completion.

Daniel is the only producer who articulates specifically how acceptance of technical media savvy as routine might facilitate program production:

Daniel: ... Being systematic, we learned very quickly how mechanically to do things.... and we developed a point where we didn’t have to think we’ve got to punch this button, this button, this button. We just said do it and it did it mechanically. These are very good things systematically to be able to get into your head. Just like walking, you don’t have to tell which foot to put first. We’ve learned some of these things and these were the things that we’re learning in the studio. How do you just go from nothing to a program on the air. You could start it up and you wouldn’t even have to think. You just -- your hands would do it. (b1P4a)

Based on an analysis of the interview data, it seems as though the internalization and utilization of the production codes and skills without thought—as appropriate—become a matter of survival for the respondents; too much thought about the process at the wrong time seems to lead to error. Survival—either personal in the form of performance, or professional in the form of program completion—depends on the delicate balance between the appropriate foregrounding of seams-shattering and the backgrounding of the technical as routine.

**Symbolic Media Savvy**

Symbolic media savvy reflects a conscious level of articulating and interpreting the symbolic codes used within
the construction of video programs. Symbolic media savvy manifests a reflexive analysis of the reason codes are employed, their significance, and how they are to be interpreted. While many or even all of the respondents may operate at this level, the data indicate that only a few express awareness and/or interpretation and/or evaluation of these symbolic codes, and even these responses are not directly attributable to the informant's experiences with public access television.

Denise provides such an example when discussing the desirability of works by independent film and video makers on a separate television channel:

Denise: Well, I would like to see stuff like that myself because then it would give you more than just a general or generic view of life. Right now when you watch TV you've kind of a generic way -- if you have -- what they present on TV now is what people wish it was like for them.... They create a -- just like with the cars, you'll be sexy if you drive this car. They create this image of what everybody wishes their life would be through the television right now when it's really not like that. That's how they sell stuff. If you do this, if you wear this perfume -- this is the type of family like even with Thirtysomething when I watched that puke. It almost had a way of this is how couples act, and that's not how couples act, everybody's got a different situation. (b3P4a)

Denise is describing the symbolic imagery associated with the video programs—the mainstream meanings that are represented by the video images, such as "you'll be sexy if you drive this car," and "this is how couples act." These readings are consistent with symbolic media savvy, as is the
passage below, where Thea describes the symbolic content and impact of mainstream television programs:

Thea: *I don’t have much appreciation for television because -- unless it’s another station and not one of the mainstream stations -- because I think television continually tells people that they’re not intelligent enough and it doesn’t cause them to think as much as it should and it influences too many people into one way of thinking and I think that’s bad. It limits us.* (b3Pla)

One difficulty with analyzing symbolic media savvy is that it is not possible to determine from the data whether the respondents’ readings of the symbolic codes of television result from experiences with public access or whether these beliefs and observations were held prior to public access participation. However, the data does indicate that this access participation certainly has not challenged, and may have reinforced, these beliefs.

**System Media Savvy**

System media savvy refers to the ability to identify, evaluate, and/or integrate internal and external organizational structures and policies related to the media. System media savvy parallels the concept of media demystification, and is related to the vision road map framework by its association with the rows of media organization and non-media institutional relationships in the video empowerment chart.
As discussed in chapter 4, the data support the notion that media demystification is an outcome of the access experience for most— but not all— of the producers participating in this study. These findings also indicate that media demystification is primarily cognitive in nature, rather than action-oriented.

Chapter 2 discussed similarities and contrasts between media literacy and media demystification. While media literacy focuses on representation through images, media demystification concentrates on "reading" the structures and functions of the media in order to understand that television programs are constructed by individuals and groups with specific economic, cultural, and political interests.

There are five aspects of system media savvy that are explored below:

- **Routine division of labor**: an internalization of the traditional division of labor associated with the production team on the part of producers

- **ACTV policies**: responses related to the management and operation of the ACTV access facility

- **Public access in general**: responses commenting on the nature and significance of the concept of public access;

- **Public access versus mainstream media**: comments that compare public access television with the traditional, mainstream commercial media

- **Cable/Government/Access relationships**: comments related to the connections between cable company, city government, and public access facility
These five aspects reflect the increasingly outward orientation of producers to systems and their impacts: from the immediate experience within the production crew, to connection to ACTV policies, to a connection with public access in general, to comparing access with mainstream television, to recognizing the interplay involving access, the cable company, and the city government.

**System Media Savvy and Routine Division of Labor.**

System media savvy and routine division of labor is similar to the assumptions of the technical as routine found within technical media savvy. All respondents indicated an awareness of the structure of the production group (the crew) and an implementation of this structure; however, this was rarely overtly stated. Rather it was considered common knowledge throughout the interviews. Thea provides an example of the routine division of labor:

Thea: ... I liked doing the camera work and that was my most comfortable and best area. And the staff person of ACTV felt good at directing and being in front of the camera and talking, so that was his area. And the other guy just went with him and did some funny things, pulled people from the background in. So it was like we had one person bringing people in, interacting with them. We had a person directing and talking and then you had the person doing the camera work. So it was the best of all areas.... (81P4a)

As mentioned during the discussion of technical media savvy as routine, this is akin to riding a bicycle: once a structure has been learned and utilized, it is accessed as a
part of the everyday materials of producing a television program.

Daniel also provides an example of the system as routine; in this instance he refers to working on a complex program with a large crew:

Daniel: ... I think there were about four other people working in the control room at that time and we always had at least three cameramen. So it was a big crew and trying to make sure that everyone was ready to go and knew what button to push at the right time was very frustrating at times [laughing]. It kind of pushed the envelope of the challenge. Amazingly enough though we got through them all. (b1P3a)

... I've had a lot of shows over there. The person comes in, has no idea what's gonna happen that day. You sit down. You have no idea who is sitting to your left or your right and how to describe what you're gonna do, how you're gonna do it, what commands you're gonna give. It's difficult on a person you've never been with before. It got us to the point where before each show we'd sit down and we talked to each other. We knew if we had a new person. We knew how to approach that person, how to explain what we were gonna do and who was gonna do what. That was very systematic. As an electrical engineer you've got to be very systematic on certain things. It is sort of a learning process that you have to get into. (b1P4a)

While providing an example of system media savvy as routine, Daniel also sheds a bit of light on the necessity for the division of labor within the production group: the structure aids an integration of individuals into a smoothly functioning unit. This implies a "survival" facet of the system as routine that is similar to the previously discussed technical media savvy as survival skill; it is merely noted here. More germane to this study is the
connection of the experience within the production group and its relevance to a sense of a community, collective action and the ability to make a difference in the world. These associations will be explored later in this chapter.

**System Media Savvy and ACTV Policies.** This aspect of system media savvy refers to comments by producers regarding the policies of ACTV. It is discussed broadly below; it is also involves a particular dimension—ACTV policies and participation—which involves comments regarding the level of participation appropriate for community producers within the public access structure.

It comes as no surprise that all respondents are very aware of ACTV policies related to the use of equipment and facilities. As producers involved in reserving facilities and equipment, and as crew members participating in their use, they encounter ACTV policies each time they enter the facility.

The only notable source of conflict throughout media savvy occurs in the aspect related to system media savvy and ACTV policies. Comments regarding ACTV policies are routinely expressed by the producers as problems with the policies, and usually a solution is proposed:

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5 References to ACTV policies and procedures were not included in coding within the media demystification row of media organization, as reported during the quantitative presentation of data in chapter 4.
Tom: ... it [studio policy] used to be first come, first served, whoever wants it, and that to me is more public access. Now I understand you got to have some type of format about what's going on. See, I made a suggestion one time that if the slot was open, regardless of whether you had your maximum allowed in that month, I just go back there and say if this slot is open and nobody wants it, anybody should be able to walk in and say first come, first serve, let me have it. And I keep saying it over and over and I hate to keep repeating myself but I have a problem with that. If nobody is there and I walk in off the street and I want to do my program and nobody is in the studio and nobody is using it, the budget didn't say that slot is supposed to be rested. The budget says that slot is supposed to be used.... (b8P5a)

Tom is referring to ACTV guidelines governing the scheduling and use of the production studio, policies about which complaints are frequently voiced. Charlie also expresses dissatisfaction with the amount of available studio time and the facility's hours of operation:

Charlie: ... I'm kind of wishing that there was more evening and weekend times that were available to people without necessarily having a series, because most of the series have taken up a lot of the evening and weekend times and especially in two-hour blocks. (b9P5a)

... Having more evening and weekend times especially [would help]. I mean a lot of things, a lot of people can get together on Sundays to do stuff, and they are closed on Sunday. They close at 9:30 on Saturday.... [T]hey'd be better off being closed during the week one day so that they could be open on a time that was more accessible to the public since they are for the public. (b9P6a)

As indicated by Tom and Charlie, producers usually have suggestions addressing the policy problems they experience. The policy discussions above are related to a deeper issue
discussed below: the level of participation allowed producers within the access management structure.

**ACTV Policies and Participation.** This dimension of system media savvy as ACTV policies addresses references by a few producers of a desire to be included in policy-making activities. While only two producers made reference to this desire, it is significant in that it addresses a question posed within the scholarly literature of alternative media: What level of participation by community producers is appropriate? This discussion is notably lacking from the practitioner literature of public access reviewed for this study.

The debate involves a continuum of participation. At a lower level, participation is limited to the production of programs; at a higher level, participation includes inclusion in the formulation of policy, decision making, and planning (Berrigan 1979). Public access traditionally positions producers on the lower side of the participation continuum, with little input into management-level decisions.

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6 Berrigan here is representative of a robust area of scholarship concerned with participatory communication within the mass media, usually considered within the context of international and intranational development.

7 Activist producers at ACTV have organized a Producer's Advisory Committee (PAC), which attempts to speak for producers' interests. The PAC has struggled to be (continued...
The lack of discussion by practitioners within public access circles regarding the appropriate level of participation within public access facilities inevitably leads to conflict. The issue does not seem to be perceived by the participants involved in either management, the producers, or the ACTV Board. As a result, the issue is not resolved and continually emerges as a power struggle between individuals.8

Trent provides an example of the issues involved. In this instance he refers to a producers' organization that became involved in a discussion of resource allocation for all Columbus access channels (public, city, and educational):

Trent: ... I was the chairman of the Producers Advisory Committee for public access, and there was a problem with studio space, studio time, trying to get a bigger facility, trying to get other things and bringing together the community of producers from the city who wanted change. They were trying -- they were tired of looking at these certain bylaws and rules and things that were conditioning or trying to really hold us back from producing what we wanted.

So there was a show called "PAC" and PAC is the acronym for Producers Advisory Committee and in doing this we -- myself and a few others who

7(...continued)

included on the ACTV Board of Trustees; there is a history of conflict between individuals involved in leadership roles of PAC, ACTV management, and the ACTV Board. As of this writing (October 1994), the chair of the PAC holds a nonvoting seat on the ACTV Board.

8 My analysis of this situation is based on eight years of personal observation of the situation at ACTV. Over the years I have spoken with ACTV staff, board members, and producers.
were on the board for the Producers Advisory, on the committee -- we were trying to present something that we would take to City Hall to the Council meeting to help push the consolidation idea that was presented some 4, 5 years ago. There was an idea that all the cable stations of -- Columbus Cable Broadcasting that would be the Public Access Channel, the Educable Channel and the Government Channel -- that we could consolidate all three and put them under the same umbrella and get a bigger space, get better equipment and just the monies and everything would help out. Just bringing all the monies together and just being able to have an owned kind of studio, station and it would have these different entities all under one.

The producers -- we came up with our own proposal. We came up with our own -- the taping of the show. We presented it not only to the consolidation committee -- the people who were on the boards of each entity who came together to create the idea -- we not only came to them as producers and saying this is what we think it is, we were commended on our proposal. We were the only ones who turned in any kind of feasible, something that would possibly work, blueprints and all and even the locations of buildings where we could go and all that. We did the work. We did all the footwork, did a lot of work and what happened is the process did not happen. They did not consolidate because the powers up there that be producers, uh the Public, the Educable, and the Government Channel, each one wanted to have the ultimate control over the whole station. (B5)

Trent is describing involvement by producers in resource allocation and organizational structure, described by Berrigan (1979) as a higher level of participation than is considered typical within public access facilities. Tom also refers to participation by producers in the management structure of the access facility:

Tom: ... that was a time when they were considering shutting down access TV because we had a multitude of problems then: A new building, monies and everything else. A lot of producers were getting leery of what was going on and they
had a lot of effort and time tied up in their programs and not receiving any money for them but just recognition and what you and all of that. And then to put up with some of the rhetoric [laughing] and red tape and all the other stuff, trying to get a program done too. It was a headache and it became more or less a job than something that you enjoy.

But you wanted to stick through it because you had already suffered that long to get the position where you was and it is hard to jump ship when you’ve worked so hard to get something established and then they try to rock the boat in a lot of different ways. Because a lot of people on the Board they didn’t understand public access and they really didn’t care because most of them don’t even have cable anyway.... (b2P3a)

... then this three or four month lapse of bad equipment and everything. It makes you wonder what’s going on or why can’t we do better or let’s do better. And basically a lot of it had to do with not allowing the producers to be a part of a lot of the stuff and it was mainly all staff, and the producers are the ones who put on the programs. And we mainly had most of the knowledge of hands-on equipment ... (b2P5a)

Both Trent and Tom became involved in ACTV structural and policy issues when the number of equipment breakdowns at the facility became problematic. As producers frequently using the equipment, they felt their input was not being considered by the access facility managers, so they took steps to correct the problem.

This move to correct structural problems within the access facility—which are also associated with city government relationships—is related to an exploration of the theme of "making a difference." That discussion later in this chapter investigates awarenesses and actions that address power relationships within the societal realm.
System Media Savvy and Public Access in General. This refers to responses commenting on the nature and significance of the concept of public access. All of the producers expressed an awareness about the nature of public access. These were usually, but not exclusively, addressed within the context of interview questions related to personal and institutional visions of public access. Charlie provides an example of how producers referred to public access; she describes how she began to see public access as more than just "being on TV," but as really making a difference in people’s lives. In her case it occurred when she was working on a program involving a couple discussing their son’s death.

Charlie: ... that was a big revelation to me when that happened that I really looked at public access as being a lot more important than just a bunch of neighbors and friends wanting to go down and be on TV and talk about things that really did do more for the public as a whole. (B3)

Charlie’s comment is typical of producer responses related to the nature of public access. Further exploration of producer notions of public access is more appropriately continued within discussions of alternative visions of public access found later in this chapter.

System Media Savvy as Public Access Versus Mainstream Media. System media savvy as public access versus mainstream media refers to comments that compare public access television with the mainstream media, often
commercial broadcast television networks. The data show
that a few producers see access as allowing them to compete
with the mainstream media. These producers compared access
programs with the programs created by the mainstream media.
For example, Noreen recognized that people in public access
produce programs on topics not handled by mainstream media;
she mentioned that the "little people" are the ones that
create programs "not usually covered by the big stations"
(b3P5a). One example she provides is a program she produced
on the issue of homelessness when the local newspaper had no
stories on the subject (B3).

Noreen: ... The Columbus Dispatch had nothing or
very little about the homeless and I did a whole
half-hour show on a rally the homeless had at the
statehouse.... (B3)

Thea's comments during the earlier discussion of
program media savvy indicate how she incorporates elements
into her productions that mainstream television doesn't
include (b3P4a), making a distinction in her mind between
public access and mainstream media. Tom provides a general
comment on public access and the mainstream media; here he
addresses the ability of people "off the street" to compete
with people in the mainstream media:

Tom: ... So it [public access] kind of cuts the
big-shots down a little bit to let them know that,
hey you ain't the only ones that can do it. (B10)

The comments above indicate an awareness of the
differences between the mainstream media and public access
television as media systems; all media are not lumped
together in the eyes of these producers. By their public access participation, respondents are able to see and act upon differences in the media systems. As such, the producers are indicating their ability to recognize and act upon perceived relationships that are based on power, as discussed in chapter 2. These relationships are further discussed within the theme of "making a difference," later in this chapter.

System Media Savvy and Cable/Government/Access Relationships. System media savvy and cable/government/access relationships refers to the connections among the cable company, city government, and the public access facility. A few respondents expressed an awareness of the relationships among these entities; some also took some action in this area. Noreen provides an example of an awareness of these complex interconnections; here she recognizes that public access is dependent on large corporations—including the local cable company:

Noreen: ... realizing that you’re up against such big corporations and they have all the money, and how important it is to be nice to them and be nice to Warner Cable because they’re gonna be negotiating with Columbus or Franklin County in that the money from ACTV will be coming from that contract. So we are still dependent on big companies.... we don’t have the money and they do. And the people with money usually win.... then the little people will never get their shows on. If Warner cuts its budget and we can’t have a studio open full-time then the community won’t be able to make as many shows as it wants to.... they [the little people] are the ones that will do things
Noreen is expressing awareness of a complex relationship involving the franchise agreement—a contract negotiated between the city government and the cable company—that sets out the provisions for funding of the access facilities.

Meredith provides another example of system media savvy and cable/government/access relationships; in her case, she describes the realization that ACTV producers were helped by their access experience when they sat down in discussions with city officials:

Meredith: ... we had people at [Channel] 21 who had been working there for years who were because of their experiences at 21 more informed and were able to empower other people, inform other people. And I would see this at the meetings where we were sitting down face-to-face with people directly related to the city government and other governmental bodies and to see that how 21 producers were just that much far ahead because of their connections with 21. Whereas before or without that connection they perhaps would not be as equipped to handle themselves as well as they did at these meetings in terms of informing people of what's going on. What I mean what's going on -- I mean in all sorts of areas, not just with cable, with things happening in government that relate to us, people in cable, access as well as some of the broader channels, the commercial channels. People were quite informed because of their dealings with the kind of programs they do, the kind of people that they have to come in contact with in order to get their programs done. I've met some pretty interesting and valuable people through 21 because of this. (B7)

Note that, in addition to describing her perceptions of the value of public access for learning to deal with government officials, Meredith also seems to relate a
situation similar to the earlier discussion of participation. There, Trent and Tom described situations that were based on producer survival: the equipment was breaking down, and they were addressing the situation. Here Meredith says, "the kind of people that they [producers] have to come in contact with in order to get their programs done." It seems that awareness or participation in access-related governance and institutions is adopted primarily because it relates to survival: the program must be completed. This implies that access participation may involve an expanding process from the program outward to more complex relationships involving government and other institutions and organizations. This notion of access as a process is addressed later in this study.

Summary: System Media Savvy

The data above indicate a rather sophisticated awareness of the intricacies of relationships within various media systems and among media and other institutions. These awarenesses are often translated into action addressing these awarenesses on the part of the respondents in this study. System media savvy is a reflection of the sensitizing concept of media demystification, where the

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9 This idea connects with a previous discussion of survival in "Technical Media Savvy as Routine" and "System as Routine."
complex relationships within media and between other institutions are made more clear.

**Struggles Against Media Savvy**

As discussed in chapter 3, an examination of instances of struggle that contradict a theme help investigate dimensions within a theme (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Dervin 1983).

No instances of struggles against the theme of media savvy were found in the data. Almost all the producers cited frustrations with broken equipment and personal struggles to learn the process of production; many cited annoyances with ACTV policies. As noted above, there is a struggle within ACTV regarding the appropriate level of participation for producers. However, these are judged to constitute particular difficulties within the various aspects of media savvy rather than a challenge to media savvy itself.

A few comments by Tom come closest to representing a struggle against the theme of media savvy. He resists information involving the theory behind the technical aspects of equipment operation:

Tom: It `[on-the job training] makes sense to me because a lot of the technical part I couldn't tell you nothing about it. But I could take you down there and do your program [laughing], see. I could take you down there and do your program. But you ask me some things, some technical things and I'll just say yes, yes, yes, and that'll be about the end of it, because that's not -- that
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wouldn’t be important to me. But I could show you — you could tell me a technical part and go down there and you wouldn’t be able to do it, but I could show you what to do because I’ve had the on-the-job training. And there’s a lot of people that come in there who have a lot of the technical knowledge but they can’t do it until they get their on-the-job training part too, see, and it is like any other job, the same thing. You know, you go to school and learn about Sigmund Freud and all the rest of them and never use them [laughing], ... and do what? [laughing] And you become a cashier [laughing].... (b6P8a)

While resisting certain aspects of technical theory, Tom is not fighting against having media savvy—learning to "read" or "write" television programs. Indeed, his comments throughout this chapter have indicated a sophisticated ability to shatter the seams of television’s "reality" and to internalize complex technical theory, and an interest in both. His struggle seems more with pedagogical issues, regarding the amount and type of information necessary for competency and the manner in which it is taught.

Within this pedagogical arena, Tom supports the training process as it exists at ACTV and seems to be expressing irritation with traditional, institutional methods of teaching and learning:

Tom: ... [S]ometimes they say well you have to know the technical part. You have to go to school and learn all this first and then you learn how to do this thing. Well, OJT is just the opposite sometimes. You learn the hands-on part and then you start learning the technical part. That to me is helpful because it reaches the level of people who really can’t read and do the things that you know. (b6P8a)
Tom is basically arguing for a "practice, then theory" pedagogical approach; he is not contesting elements of media savvy itself.

While an analysis of training methods and pedagogical practices as they occur outside institutional education is relevant to this study, they are considered ancillary to the primary research questions of this dissertation. Future explorations of this topic will undoubtedly yield rich findings related to appropriate pedagogical practices in the experiential setting.

The rather pristine nature of the theme of media savvy makes it immediately suspect within a critical framework. However, it is possible that the relationship of the theme to the basic nature of activity involved in video production accounts for its lack of contradiction or challenge. Those who would challenge the media savvy that develops from video production may leave early in the training process; this indicates an area rife with possibilities for future research.

**Conclusions: Media Savvy**

The association of the media savvy subthemes of program, technical, symbolic, and system with the elements of media literacy indicates a major finding of this study: that respondents are able to evaluate program content, intent, technical elements, and the symbolic meanings found
within television programs; they also are able to utilize many of these elements regularly in the program-production process.

The data within the theme of media savvy supports and enhances the media education literature related to media literacy and media demystification. The findings in this area support the claims of media education, that video training leads to the ability to deconstruct the "reality" of television.

The findings also support the critical media education assertions that the "reading" and "writing" of media are very much connected skills, and not disconnected entities (Sholle and Denski 1993).

As outlined at the start of this chapter, media literacy and media demystification constitute the first steps in the access vision road map:

media literacy ——> media demystification — empowerment (awareness of self, others, and society; action to change relationships in these areas)

Media savvy has addressed the initial points of the map. The discussion continues with an exploration of the personal connections producers make with their access experience.

2. It's Personal

The data indicate that most producers in this study cast their access experiences in terms of how it relates to
their personal lives; these internal linkings may be intellectual, emotional, etc. As noted in chapter 4, some of the respondents do experience a new awareness of self and others as a result of their access experience.

"It's personal" closely parallels elements found within the personal domain on the video empowerment chart. As discussed in chapter 4, this column is ranked second among the empowerment domains in amount of talk on the part of the respondents (2.2, Table 1).

Within "it's personal" are three major organizing subthemes, reflecting the manner in which respondents referred to the personal framing of the access experience:

- **Learned about self**: refers to an understanding or appreciation of one's self
- **Learned about others**: refers to an understanding or appreciation of others as they relate to one's self
- **Life enrichment**: refers to a broadening of the quality of one's life on intellectual, emotional, informational, social, or other grounds not related to learning about self or others.

Each of these is explored in turn below.

**Learned About Self**

"Learned about self" refers to an understanding or appreciation of aspects of one's self. The data indicate that many respondents became aware of previously unknown personal qualities, or became more accepting of themselves.

These findings parallel those reported elsewhere. Fuller (1984) describes learning experiences by producers
that include aspects of self and others similar to some of those found in this study.\textsuperscript{10}

Within the empowerment chart, learned about self is most closely related to the intersection of the row of self and self life and the column of personal. This point reflected the second greatest percentage of respondents with a heavy emphasis in talk judged as cognition (55.6\%, Table 8; illustrated in Figure 19). This intersection point also consistently reflected a great deal of talk overall (cognition + action), talk about cognition, and talk about action (Tables 1 through 9).

Aspects of learned about self discussed below include the following:

- **Self-esteem**: refers to an increase in positive self-image
- **Acceptance of self**: refers to an ability to accept aspects of one's personality or character

**Self-Esteem.** The recognition of self-esteem, described as an increase in positive self-image, is common among the

\textsuperscript{10} Fuller's study did not focus on an awareness of self and others on the part of producers. Fuller merely reported the producer responses related to "things they learned" as a result of their public access participation.

Ancillary aspects of other studies related to this discussion, but not directly germane to this study, include the demographic backgrounds of producers (Enos 1979), the reasons volunteers produce programs (White 1988), and producers' intents toward the channel structure, programs, and audience (Hardenbergh 1985).
data. Thea’s response is typical of the connection made by many producer:

Thea: ... It made you feel good. It helped your self-esteem and it made you feel like you created something worthwhile. (B3)

... I think it helps to know that people, some people have come up to me and said, when they find out that I’m the person who did this video.... Oh yeah, I saw your video. That just does something to me, like Wow, it makes you feel good. It helps your self-esteem, helps you get motivated and want to go out there and do another project. (G4, Access Visions)\(^\text{11}\)

For Denise, completion of her first program after two years of work was related to her view of herself:

Denise: ... I got confidence in myself, a lot more than I’ve had in the last two years. (b7P4a)

Tom also refers to self-esteem; in his case it is also related to his view of other people:

Tom: ... [W]ell it was something revealed inside of me to give me a more positive look at myself, more of a positive look at the neighborhood, a positive look at other people. I believe that this helped me strengthen myself. Irregardless, television is a powerful thing, you know, and it helped me to be a stronger person, I believe.... (b1P4a)

Alfred describes self-esteem in the form of prestige.

In contrast to Tom, Alfred’s comment is directed more at how others perceive him:

Alfred: It’s [producing a program] made a difference for me in the sense that people are looking at me differently. They are looking at me as a production person as opposed to a street person, as opposed to a basic layman. They’re

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\(^\text{11}\) In this and other citations, "G1" refers to group interview 1. "Access Visions" refers to the discussion of the vision of public access during this group interview.
seeing me on-screen. They’re seeing my name on-screen. They’re seeing my work on screen. And it’s given me a bit of prestige. That is pretty good for me.... (B4)

Self-esteem seems to be related in part to the completion of a creative work and the acquisition of technical skills not previously attained. Charlie’s response is typical of the types of responses producers gave, particularly when working with technical equipment. In Charlie’s case, she realized she can accomplish things she hadn’t tried before.

Charlie: ... it [the experience] made me open up to realizing that I could do more, that maybe I was selling myself a little short for what I could do and that I did have the capabilities to do more even though I hadn’t even tried it before. It just kind of happened and yes I did have those abilities too. (b2P7a)

The data indicate that the positive self-esteem described above often is not automatic; it is often acquired after overcoming difficulties that erode self-esteem (Alfred b2P1a; Denise B1, b1P4a).

Acceptance of Self. As part of the process of learning about themselves, some respondents described a period of coming to terms with parts of themselves. Charlie mentioned that her experiences with her show enabled her to be more accepting of herself and her differences from others:

Charlie: It [the experience with the show] makes me maybe accept myself a little bit more in that even though that it might jaded, that I’m putting a lot of my time and work into doing something that’s not financially rewarding. But that it is
very emotionally rewarding for me because it is something I enjoy doing.

... I just accept myself for what I am doing, for what I want to do and if you know these people, family, friends, whatever think I am nuts for doing it well then they have to live their life the way that they want to do it but I can live my life the way that I want to and I really enjoy doing it.... (bSP4a)

Charlie is describing an acceptance of aspects of her personality that result in a greater awareness of her self. For her, this awareness is based on recognizing the differences that separate her from friends and family.

For Trent, a former addict, the awareness of self is related to his recognition that working on a show about crack cocaine was difficult because of his addiction to the drug:

Trent: ... It was hard to do the show because of the fact that I had to go back into those areas. I had to look deep into myself. I had to look at myself and I had to go through the process of looking at an overwhelming desire, a temptation. Trying not to walk that side of the street which she called walking on the wild side. I had to try to stay in my creative mind and my creative mode and stay on the right side.... (b9P1a)

Learned About Others

"Learned about others" refers to an understanding or appreciation of others as they relate to one’s self. The data suggest that a new awareness of others is an outcome for most of the producers in this study. Within the empowerment chart, learned about others is most closely related to the intersection of the row of others and column
of personal. This point reflected the greatest percentage of respondents with a heavy emphasis in talk judged as cognition (66.7%, Table 8; illustrated in Figure 19).

Noreen illustrates the influences that working with others within the public access setting offer the producers. In her case, she learned a great deal from working with African-American women:

Noreen: ... [It was] helpful just listening to them and listening to their concepts and their different ways of looking at things in that when I deal with the African-American culture of course I have stereotypes but they were talking about things that were even different than things I had thought that weren't stereotype things that I had gone past and they were talking about a whole different level. And I think that whole different level needed to be on ACTV. That really needed to be there. That just being able to experience that part of it was really rewarding. Just -- it doesn't usually happen when you get with African-American women they usually talk your language, instead they were talking their language and I was the one that was just there to sit on the side.... It was just interesting. I just really appreciated that opportunity to learn what they had to offer. (b5P4a)

Daniel spoke extensively about how his perceptions of others were changed while working on programs. Here he discusses how his perceptions of African-Americans were altered:

Daniel: Just to better understand them [African-Americans] and understand where they're coming from. I've always had the impression they're living in all these dirty, rat-infested places because they don't give a damn. Well, they aren't really that rat-infested and a lot of them they are not dirty. It kind of opened my eyes in a lot
of things that I always assumed.... Again, they become people again.... (b10P4a)

The biggest thing was just ... my ignorance of the [African-American] community as to what they did and they were just areas of community in town that white folks never went into. And that's about what I thought of it at the time. It's a very, very good group of people. They are very sincere and I found myself questioning why I thought that way about them in the first place. (b10P5a)

Daniel also describes a different perception of homosexuals after working on a gay-oriented show:

Daniel: ... probably at that time ... I would have not have had anyone that I could talk to about situations involving gays. They were probably all faggots and lesbians, not people. And one of our bad things in this world it seems to be we want to label people and not necessarily because they deserve it but just because they're different. It has opened up a lot of the inside. To them there is no big deal on it. We are the ones making the issue, more than they are. If we can't handle it then it's gonna get worse....

[If you see gays as people] you can treat them better. You understand them. You don't necessarily believe their same ideas but you understand how they're doing it. And when you come up against someone now that you know is anti whatever -- if you know something about it you can step in and say "Well you know that really isn't right. That is not completely true." Try to keep the walls from being built. Maybe not so much tear them down but keep the walls from being built as quickly as they have been.... (b9P4a)

Noreen and Daniel provide examples of the manner by which producers relate their access experiences to an awareness of others.

**Life Enrichment**

"Life enrichment" refers to a broadening of the quality of one's life on intellectual, emotional, informational,
social, or other grounds not related to learning about self or others. Aspects discussed below include the following:

- **Intellectual life enrichment**: refers to a sense of intellectual stimulation—learning and growing—on the part of the producers.

- **Therapeutic life enrichment**: refers to the psychological benefits producers connect with access participation.

- **Career-related life enrichment**: refers to the work opportunities producers obtain from access training.

- **Social life enrichment**: refers to benefits in the producers' social lives.

**Intellectual Life Enrichment.** Intellectual life enrichment refers to a sense of stimulation in the area of learning as evidenced in the data. While intellectual life enrichment can be detected in the earlier discussion of media literacy, only Pierre, a high school teacher, overtly described the process of learning and its effect on him. Pierre's comments are included here because they provide a link between the institutional approach to media education found within the literature, and the experiential learning situation found within Freire's critical pedagogy.

In this instance, Pierre, a dropout producer, casts his experience in terms of the thrill of learning and teaching:

Pierre: ... Having the chance to take what you produce and showing it cablecast was just a real exciting event. For me personally, it was that experience of seeing a new way or different way of teaching or learning, interacting. Because there were times when I was first there, I was a learner, and I was asking people a lot of
questions, but there’s an interesting moment when people start asking me questions.

And I say, OK, I’ve got some information I can share with them; and suddenly it’s -- those lines are blurred. It’s not here’s your desk and you’re on this side and a teacher; on this side you’re a student -- it’s like we’re all learning, we’re all teaching each other.

And there’ll be times when I’m in a suite and working on some things and want to do something, but can’t; so I grab someone out in the hall and bring them in, and in 5 minutes they teach me something, and then they’re off doing their thing and I’m back to what I’m doing.

... [I]t was a wonderful experience. Getting the knowledge, getting the information that you needed at the time, when you needed it. They were ready for it and you wanted to get it, and now’s the time to get it. (G4, Significant Experience)

Here, Pierre is providing actual evidence of the moment often described only theoretically by critical pedagogists: the time at which the lines blur between student and teacher. A key element to this positive experience seems to be that people were able to get information they needed at the time they needed it. This experience may provide guidance to pedagogists attempting to construct situations that may result in a blurring of the line between student and teacher.

This data also reinforces Sense-Making theory, which argues that people seek helps (which may come in the form of information) at the times they sense gaps in their lives; they construe the information as helpful to their lives at that particular moment. Pierre has vividly described such an incident.
Therapeutic Life Enrichment. Therapeutic life enrichment refers to the psychological benefits producers connect with access participation. A few producers specifically mentioned these benefits as a result of their access participation.

Thea provides one such example. She recognized that producing a program was therapeutic. In her case, it helped her work through the loss of family members:

Thea: ... Public access as a whole was a very therapeutic process for me. It was something like a — somewhat of a catharsis for me at the time when I was really into it. It was shortly after I lost four members of my family in a year and I moved out of the town I came from and just needed to get away and do something totally different and I needed to throw myself into something and I hadn’t done anything artistic or creative for about two and a half years and there I was and I needed some kind of vision or something and my regular forms of creativity were not functioning at that point, like painting and drawing and stained glass, that sort of stuff.... (B4)

I would say it was a form of catharsis for me in dealing with parts of my life and the grief that I went through of my family, grieving over them, and it was a tribute to them and to people that were important in my life.... (b4p4a)

Daniel uses public access like therapy—to unwind at the end of the work day:

Daniel: Well, to them a lot of these shows are the most important thing that they do in their life, and to me working down at the access is a point of relaxation. It’s a way of trying to unwind the mind after a busy day. At the office I’m basically sitting down, thinking and writing. Here I can be down and moving equipment around, resetting lights. I could be running audio. I can do things with my hands. So to me that’s almost like my therapy.... (b5p5a)
In both examples, Thea and Daniel have referred to life-enriching aspects of their access experience: it helps them cope with their lives outside the access facility.

**Career-Related Life Enrichment.** Career-related life enrichment refers to the work opportunities producers obtain from access training. A few producers view public access as a means to a media-related career. Meredith uses public access as a way to get a future job in scriptwriting:

Meredith: ... *Sometimes I've had this kind of a pipe dream that my TV show was on the air and some high-flying exec either from the east or west coast or even better yet outside of this country, perhaps Europe, flies through. They're in their hotel room, can't find anything on TV, turns on [Channel] 21, sees my program and makes inquiries as to who this person is and the next thing I know there's a contract to start story development for a new TV series. So that's kind of been a thought.* (b10p6a)

Throughout his interview, Alfred repeatedly stated that he uses public access to sharpen his video skills in order to forge a career in movies:

Alfred: ... *You know I'm using my show on the public access station and I'm using my involvement with the public access station to sharpen my skills for video production so that I can get ready to make movies. My main goal is to get to the point where I can make movies. I'm walking across the United States and I'm at the Mississippi River. I'm on the east side of the Mississippi River and if I can get up and get going out there to Melrose Avenue by way of what I'm doing, taking this one step at the time. It will be the goal that I've been wanting to reach for a long time. So when I feel like I'm good enough by way of working with the public access station to get my show and other people's shows and everything and going out there and give*
that my best shot and then further down the line you'll be seeing and hearing my work. (E1)

Bill is the promotion director for a local radio station. He attributes his ability to get a media job in part to his participation in public access:

Bill: It was almost selfish for me because I had a reason for doing it, to gain experience, to get a job, to get ahead in my major.... (G4, First Involvement)

It gave me the opportunity to put on my resume numerous things that no class or internship would ever begin to do....

It helped me, and that was probably was at first in the back of mind and what came out before we even got on the air, was that I was going to be able to use this as a stepping-stone as the experience for getting a job. (G4, Significant Experience)

The use of the public access facilities for career advancement described above connects with the theme of alternative visions of public access discussed later in this chapter.

**Social Life Enrichment.** Social life enrichment refers to the benefits in the social lives and leisure time of the producers as a result of their access participation. While few respondents address this aspect directly, the group and individual interviews give rise to the sense that perhaps public access provides a social club of sorts.

Denise is one producer who directly addresses how public access enhances her social life:

Denise: Okay I ... feel like cable access has given me in a sense like a social life. I like the people at cable access. I really do. I mean
I prefer to go to cable access than go out on the town. I met people. We've had pizza together. I've met some of the bands there. I like cable access and of course I've run into some things that are not so great but I've run into more good than bad.... So I like it. I really, really like cable access. (b6P3a)

Charlie does not specifically address the "club" aspect of public access, but she does note how her work at public access tends to dominate her leisure hours:

Charlie: The program, it really has become my life. It's how I define I guess what I enjoy doing. People call and say "Let's go out to dinner" or whatever and I'm like well I have to go down to ACTV and work on something and I have people that want to do stuff with me and I'm like well I have to go do this and I have to go do that and I have to go do this and it's -- they sometimes don't understand. They think maybe that when I say oh I have to do this, I have to do that, that I have to do it and I'm like well I don't really have to do it you know [laughing] that I want to do it. I enjoy doing it because it's -- that's where I realize that I enjoy doing the video stuff. That this has become -- it's become what I -- the visions that I look for. Just like when I'm out -- like I said, I'm out driving around or whatever, that I see different things and think in terms of how can I use these different things. You know, I wish I had a camera here. I wish I had a camera there and stuff. That I'm the videographer now. I'm not Charlie the musician anymore. I'm not Charlie the computer operator. Now I'm the videographer, the producer that pulls all this together for everybody. (b10P7a)

Here, Charlie not only exemplifies the manner by which one's social life might be enriched by access participation, she also provides a glimpse at how her self-image is also connected to her access experience. In addition, while "others" are not referred to directly, the context of Charlie's interview is oriented toward a community she
perceives to be involved with the production of her program. This relates the theme of "it's personal" to a discussion of community later in this chapter, and touches the edges of the dialectic between the individual and the collective discussed by Streeter (1990) and Dervin and Clark (1993) in chapter 2. This dialectical relationship is addressed more fully later in this chapter.

Tom offers a possible explanation for the social life enrichment aspect of public access participation. He explains how the process of making video programs becomes a part of a producer's life. In his case, Tom uses his program as a stepping stone to relate to people:

Tom: ... television to me, especially when you ... produce your own program is that the program itself ... becomes one of your favorite toys, you know, just something to do. You know what I'm saying? It becomes something that you want to -- that you do sit a lot of your life around. Because especially if you're obligated once a week like I am you look for things to do to be on your program. So it becomes a -- it's actually a part of your life and you have to sometimes separate that from your actual life, because it is public access. To me, like I don't do it for glory. I do it for the Lord and I don't expect anything from it. So I therefore, it becomes a part of my life but it's not all my life. And you can get hung into that. I've seen some people get hung into it that it becomes all their life. So I use it for a stepping-stone to relate to people....

While Tom's description helps to identify how public access participation may enrich the social lives of its participants, it also shows how some producers find it difficult to separate their personal lives from their lives...
as access producers, in part because of their commitment to provide access programs on a regular basis.

This may be related to survival issues; that is, the social life enrichment aspect of the public access experience may provide a necessary brainstorming for program ideas, or reinforcing of the value of access program creation. The concept of survival has been explored previously within "technical media savvy as survival skill," "system as routine," and "system media savvy." It is indicative of the relationships between these themes and that of "it's personal."

The data indicate that survival is intensely personal; they reflect the desire of the individual to maintain himself or herself at current levels, and implies a desire to expand beyond existing boundaries. Survival will continue to emerge within the discussions throughout this chapter.

Conclusions: It's Personal

The discussion above details how producers in this study have framed their access experience within the context of their own personal lives. These connections include improved self-images, altered impressions of people other than themselves, and a sense of an improvement of the general quality of life.^{12}

^{12} The framing of access experiences by respondents in (continued...
The discussion above also introduces survival as a recurring concept that establishes a relationship between the theme of "it's personal" and other themes within this chapter.

As discussed at the start of this chapter, an awareness of self is the first aspect of empowerment explored within the organizing framework provided by the access vision road map:

media literacy ---> media demystification ---> empowerment (awareness of self, others, and society; action to change relationships in these areas)

"It's personal" has explored this initial element of empowerment as awareness of self. The discussion continues with an analysis of one aspect of the connections that producers make with others.

12(...continued)

personal terms raises the question of whether this is due, in part, to the interview protocol. Based on Sense-Making, the individual protocol specifically asked producers to draw connections between their access experience and their personal lives (probe question 7a). However, only three instances drawn from the data in this discussion of "it's personal" have come from protocol probe question 7a.

Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that Sense-Making does favor the personal perspective of the respondent, allowing the reader to "see the world" from the point of view of the respondent. There is an explicit distinction between this singular perspective among the many perspectives necessary to "circle reality" and pluralist conceptions of "individualism." Sense-Making is discussed in greater detail in chapter 3; the dialectic between the individual and the collective is discussed more fully in chapter 2, and will also be explored later in this chapter.
The data indicate that many producers in this study are aware of personal and ideological differences between themselves and others inside and outside the access facility. These differences are framed within a discussion of tolerance, defined as an understanding and/or acceptance of the differences of others on the part of the participants, where the differences are either ideological or personal in nature. The discussion of tolerance by the producers involves the following constructions:

- **Tolerance of ideas**: refers to ideological differences between individuals and/or groups
- **Tolerance of personalities**: refers to personality differences, usually framed in the negative, between individuals
- **Tolerance and the First Amendment**: refers to connections between the data and analyses of the First Amendment (discussed in chapter 2)

These are discussed below.

As discussed in chapter 4, the data indicate that a new awareness of others is an outcome of the public access experience for most of the study participants. The row of "others" reflected the greatest amount of heavy emphasis by respondents of any of the areas of focus in the video empowerment chart (88.9%, Table 7; 77.8%, Table 8). The greatest emphasis by respondents across the entire empowerment chart was judged to be talk related to the row of "others" as it intersected the personal domain (66.7%, Table 8).
These references to others took many forms: members of the viewing audience, workmates, crewmates, and distant "others." The producers' talk related to tolerance focuses primarily on those persons using the ACTV facility to create programs. There is a good deal of discord—both internal and external—involved in the discussion of tolerance; respondents are identifying and enduring ideologies and personalities in conflict with their own. Discussions later in this chapter address more harmonious constructions of others by the respondents.

**Tolerance of Ideas**

The public access facility is the site of a decided struggle between competing ideological camps. While the ideological differences between these groups are sometimes enormous, the people involved depend on one another for what seem to be two reasons: (1) to reinforce their own rights of freedom of expression, and (2) to provide crew members for each other's productions.

If the ideological differences are not too great, persons from differing perspectives can work together without difficulty. In these cases, the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of speech is enough to allow an acceptance of the other's "right" to express himself or herself. However, if the differences are overwhelming, producers have devised various methods with which to
distance themselves from the offending ideals, even though
the ideals themselves may be endured.

Tolerance of ideas includes discussions of the
following:

- **Conflicting ideologies**: refers to the various
  ideological "camps" within the public access facility

- **Freedom of expression**: refers to the individual
  "right" to expression, which overrides a personal
  struggle with opposing ideologies

- **Exceptions to First Amendment dogma**: refers to an
  exception to the expression of the First Amendment as a
  constant positive

- **The mechanisms of tolerance**: refers to the methods
  created by producers to allow themselves to live
  comfortably next to opposing ideologies

- **Maintaining the distance**: refers to the manners by
  which producers distance themselves from offending
  ideals

**Conflicting Ideologies Within Tolerance of Ideas.** The
variety of groups with differing ideological perspectives is
exemplified by Thea, who provides a description of the tone
of the access facility on a busy night:

Thea: Well, public access is to me a
representation of as many different aspects of
people and their life as possible and I think a
moment of that would be when I was taking an Amiga
class and I was sitting there and it was Tuesday
night and I was sitting there at the computer, the
teacher -- and it was one-on-one because nobody
else was in that class.

So I was in euphoria sitting there and during
this two and a half hours we saw the religious
group come out and the American atheists come in,
intermingling in the lobby and the American
atheists hanging out their cards that say 1-800
dial-an-atheist and all that stuff and upsetting
the religious people, but it was something different.
And then an individual, two people in the edit suites doing their videos and then the next thing that came in were the psychics and prepare Paragon Promise and that was fun because it was just like a carnival environment to me, a carnival atmosphere because you had all this diversity going on and all this energy and people talking and intermingling, forced to intermingle in this small room and that was the main runway there and just listening to that and I thought that was the epitome of public access.
I thought that was really cool. I thought it was really nice. I mean it was totally entertaining and that's the whole point of it. So Sid and I just sat there during our class doing our thing and then looking up and listening to what people were doing and watching and then going back to what we were doing. (B6)
... it doesn't matter if you're extremely conservative or extremely off-the-wall, you can fit in here at ACTV.... (b6P6a)

Here, Thea makes reference to the diverse groups utilizing the access facility in close proximity to each other. Her emphasis is on the wide variety of seemingly oppositional groups that intermingle within the facility.

While Thea's observation is oriented toward the entertainment value of watching the variety of groups parade through the facility, Noreen's description of the varying ideological camps provides an insight into the very real differences between the factions within ACTV:

Noreen: Well ... there's two groups. There's the religious right down there and there's people like me down there and then there's the ministers who don't necessarily like women and you get all these different groups of people....
... Then you get people there who wanted to do the Klan show I think last year or the year before and you get people in there and when I mentioned that when you are a camera person you are like a fly on the wall and I see two ministers
talking to each other and they are saying that women shouldn’t be ministers. That women shouldn’t be here and women shouldn’t be here....

Both Thea and Noreen provide insights to the potential for conflict that emerge as competing groups interact within the public access facility. The methods for dealing with the ideological tensions varied; they are discussed in detail below.

Freedom of Expression Within Tolerance of Ideas. The data indicate that the dogma of freedom of expression allows producers to endure ideological differences that otherwise might be personally intolerable. Noreen describes the internal conflict sometimes caused by the encounter between

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13 These tensions between groups were in evidence at the group interview with long-time producers. Unknown to me, the group contained individuals representing many of the factions at ACTV. As he looked around the table at the individuals taking part, one producer asked, "This isn’t a debate, is it?" The reason for the question became evident at the conclusion of the session: a few individuals became involved in what seemed to be long-standing, heated arguments about politics, religion, the arts, and the nature of human existence.

By using the Sense-Making procedure of making "rounds" (discussed in chapter 3), producers were able to recognize similarities of thought related to the First Amendment and public access, rather than emphasize their ideological differences. A common statement reported back to me after the group interview was, "It’s amazing—I never had a clue [so and so] believed in the First Amendment!"

14 This is only tangentially related to a study reporting that one major reason producers are involved in public access in Austin, Texas, is for "personal expression" (White 1988).
personal values and the right of another person to create his or her own program:

Noreen: Well, I have to admit I had a tinge of censorship. When ACTV is making the -- they have the I don't know what you call it. It's a strange show, a strange sexual show and I had like my tinge -- I was watching them tape it and I've been in the studio twice and even taping it it's like oh my god I can't believe they're doing this. Can't believe they're doing it during the day and everything like that. But then I said oh you have to put up with it to show it late [laughing]. (B8)

... It's stupid you know but it's like they should be able to do that. But even when I caught it on TV one night it was like no I can't watch this, this is too stupid. Not that it was, it didn't do anything explicit. It was just stupid. I don't know. I'm sorry I keep saying stupid but I don't know how to describe it [laughing]. It was strange. (b8P2a)

Note how Noreen's internal conflict is resolved in part by resorting to the "right" of individual expression: "they should be able to do that." A reference to this right of expression is a method producers often use to cope with ideals that conflict with their own. Another example is provided by Tom:

Tom: ... like I said, I don't agree with everything that they do and they probably don't agree with everything I do. Like I said, that's what makes public access to me. We don't agree on everything but we are allowed to put forth our rights to say what we have the privilege of doing through public access. I believe, like I said, this is -- the last soapbox that we have is public access.... (b7P3a)

While referring to the right of expression, Tom also provides insight into why producers might tolerate differing belief systems: they, too, will be allowed to exercise their own right of expression:
Tom: I’ve had a couple of Lutheran churches on and they have a program called Churches Together and they come together and do a thing. I don’t agree with it all the time and I don’t agree with everything they’re doing. So what I don’t agree with I don’t put on television [laughing]. See, it’s that simple. I’m the producer. (b4P3a)

As a producer, Tom is exercising his right of expression, which includes silencing others within the framework of his program. However, the context of his interview explains that these others are able to exercise their own rights by speaking through their own program.

Other producers were not so forthcoming in explaining how their programs might provide them the opportunity to express their own points of view. Tom does capture a sense of the delicate interlacing of "my rights" and "your rights" at play within the public access facility. The mechanisms by which this subtle dance between seemingly conflicting rights are negotiated is explored later in this section.

Exception to First Amendment Dogma. Daniel provides an exception to the First Amendment dogma:

Daniel: I know a lot of people talk about that First Amendment. I don’t. I don’t want to see that as necessarily the public access point. It is, but I never think of it as First Amendment rights....

You know it’s your privilege. For some reason everyone tries to make it you know required things. Because we’ve got a Constitution we’re allowed to do this and push that issue. So much of the time I wish we could just sit back and not be pressured by somebody’s alleged rights that we’re supposed to have. Is that the only thing -- a lot of the Constitution talks about some of these things. It’s my own thoughts but you know
I'm not sure why the Constitution says we're allowed to have the KKK come down and put up crosses. You know I get into things like that. It's supposed to be religious freedoms but yet, I think what the hell is this [laughing]. Of course I don't understand the KKK either. I've never thought that particular way so I don't understand it. So, I've never had my rights restricted so I guess it's hard to understand the people that feel that they have been. (b79581)

The Mechanisms of Ideological Tolerance. The mechanisms of ideological tolerance refers to the reasons and methods that allow producers to negotiate the ideological differences they encounter at the public access facility. The data indicate that the following account for the reasons and methods that respondents are able to coexist with differing ideas:

- **The ACTV volunteer system as rationale**: refers to the institutional practice that encourages ACTV participants to work on one another's programs
- **Crew avoidance**: refers to the technique of avoiding working on crews of programs that are ideologically grating
- **Other mechanisms**: refers to additional techniques devised to tolerate opposing ideologies

The tolerance of differing ideas is not necessarily related to altruistic motives on the part of the producers, but may be linked to the particular needs on the part of the respondents. The data indicate that there seem to be two reasons for the acceptance by producers of differing ideas: (1) it provides a protection for their rights as well, as Tom suggests above; and (2) the producers need one another
because of the group nature of video production and the ACTV volunteer system.

The ACTV Volunteer System as a Rationale for Ideological Tolerance. The ACTV volunteer system seems to be a major driving force behind the producers' acceptance of mildly conflicting ideologies. Through this system producers can gain "credit" for reduced rates on equipment and facilities rentals by working on programs other than their own. Tom explains how the system works:

Tom: ... The man that has *African Mystiques*, I don't agree with him on every subject, on every thing, and he doesn't agree with me. But we are able to work together because we have a volunteer system and in that volunteer system when I volunteer on his program I get volunteer hours and I'm able to take out equipment and do certain things without [paying out money] on everything ... and the volunteer system works great for me because I don't have the capital to ... maintain the program in a certain status quo. (b7P2a)

Note that Tom here seems to be referring to relatively minor disagreements. The methods by which serious differences are negotiated are explored below.

Crew Avoidance as a Mechanism of Ideological Tolerance. The data strongly indicate that the respondents acting as crew work only on those programs with which they are ideological compatible. The producers avoid working with producers with whom they have serious ideological differences. Leo provides an example of this technique:
Leo: I mean there are people there who I totally do not agree with, their philosophies. I agree they are allowed to have their philosophies and they can do whatever they want, and I did a couple of their shows and I -- they're OK, they're not hurting anyone. It's their business and not mine -- I just might choose not to volunteer for [them] again, and then there were others who I'd volunteer for again. (G1, First Involvement)

Here Leo partially resolves his conflict within the framework of personal freedoms. He also suggests the manner by which he personally reconciles the ideological conflict: removing himself from the offending production.

This technique of not working as crew on programs with which one is ideologically at odds is very common throughout the data. Noreen also describes such a method:

Noreen: ... it's like well then I don't want to work on your TV show. It's different things like that and I consciously have said I'm not working on any more religious TV shows just because of that. And even when white men do a TV show it's very anti-woman and I won't work on their shows either. So I won't censor them. I just personally won't work on a show where they don't respect me as a person. So I have no idea what their vision is and they probably see this vision except for allowing women. I don't know how they see it, how they interpret it. (bSP3a)

As with Leo, Noreen comes to terms with serious ideological differences by refusing to work on offending productions. In this process, the "offender" has a "right" to freedom of expression, as described through the traditional pluralist assumptions, and the producer has the "right" to not get involved in the offending production.

Donna is a long-term religious producer; she explains the reasoning behind the tolerance of differing ideals in
contrast to the manner in which they exercise the 
distancing:

Donna: ... I agree in the First Amendment right, 
even though I do not agree with much of the 
programming that goes on ACTV; and we have refused 
to take part in volunteering for those things that 
we're strongly opposed to. There was a time when 
the staff there felt they could put a little 
pressure that we would have to partake in those 
things. We stood ground, and they had no ground 
because we were not paid staff. But even so, even 
with the drawbacks ... of the sanctions of the 
many different lifestyles and many different 
opinions, etc., I still believe very strongly in 
the First Amendment. I believe it's a forum 
that's opened up not just for those who are in the 
high spots and those in the broadcast networks; 
it's a forum that God has opened up the door as 
far as I'm concerned with people, and the people 
of the community, that maybe will never get 
heard.... I'm glad for public access. (Gl, Access 
Visions)

Each producer seems to have established his or her own 
standards for working or not working on programs. Tom is 
the most vocal of the producers in explicating his 
standards:

Tom: ... [N]ow this is my criteria for working on 
a program. Quite naturally, like I said, they 
can't be contradicted to my religious belief but I 
have helped people in other beliefs. I have 
showed them some things but I have not worked on 
their programs. I've helped them with the 
technical problems. They ask me. I won't refuse 
people. I don't care about -- if you ask me a 
question and I have the knowledge I'll show you if 
you ask me and I'm there. But most of the time I 
work on a program it's a learning experience for 
me about what's going on or what's in that 
person's mind or head or what they're about. 
Because I don't agree with everything [laughing]. 
(b7P2a)

Some producers disagree with the technique of crew 
avoidance described above; their belief in the First
Amendment was the basis for working on programs that were antithetical to their personal beliefs. Pierre provides such an example:

Pierre: ... There was a program on, and there was somebody who was from the Right to Life organization; and when this person showed up, one of the people on the production staff got up and left. Now, it's saying something to the effect, well, I don't believe what this person is saying. And I thought, there is a real hypocrisy here. This is public access. We're there to guarantee that we have this First Amendment of access, and yet now we're being real choosy about which programs we're going to work on because we don't agree on what it is that's being said on it. I thought from the point of view of being on a production crew and working with each other, and helping each other, I thought of Voltaire. He said I may not agree with what you say, but I'll defend to the last your right to say it. I thought that was kind of an interesting double-take on the whole concept of First Amendment free speech. (G4, Access Visions)

Daniel's perspective is similar:

Daniel: ... There were certain types of shows that I got involved with at odd times that were not enjoyable. A lot of times I would do a ... show because someone needed a crew to be working on it, not necessarily because I enjoyed that philosophy or way of life or idea that they were trying to promote. (B2)

Other Mechanisms of Tolerance. While not discussed by other respondents, one producer noted two interesting techniques he utilized that allowed him to work as crew on programs he found ideologically objectionable:

- Divorcing: refers to the process of removing oneself from the production content

- Masking: refers to the process of hiding one's own ideological beliefs
Both divorcing and masking allowed Daniel to intellectually or emotionally withdraw from the productions on which he was working. Here he describes divorcing:

Daniel: It was helpful to work on the idea of not listening much to the show and trying to divorce yourself from what was actually being said. ... Well, there were times you got uptight listening to what some of the comments were about. A lot of the philosophies were very different on the show. You don’t want to try to let your philosophies influence how the outcome of the show was. You very easily could go to an uncomplimentary shot. If he leans forward and all you see is the back of his head, that’s not the shot you want to take. So often you want to do that anyway [laughing]. But you have to be able to divorce yourself from a lot of these. It was very often through practice that we were doing it. (b2P4a)

Daniel also finds it necessary to "mask" his beliefs at times in order to get along with people on a particular program:

Daniel: ... maybe you have to learn to not listen to what’s going on, only look at what you’re seeing. Kind of put blinders on, and those are difficult at times. You get some of these abortion rights shows. People get so upset about them. You know I’ve seen cameramen walk out of studios before. Some of the religious shows, Jehovah Artful Moments you know they are very fundamentalist and you weren’t allowed on the crew unless you believed that way [laughing]. So you had to let them believe that you were somewhat believing and then you can’t put a false image up at times. Those are very difficult [for me] to get into. (B2)

Daniel’s techniques of divorcing and masking are interesting in that they provide yet another perspective on the manners by which producers negotiate the ideological differences they encounter at the public access facility.
Tolerance of Personalities

The data suggest that producers identify a distinct separation of beliefs from personal traits, and that ideological differences are handled differently than personal differences. Tom provides a glimpse at how the ideological and nonideological are separated in the minds of many producers:

Tom: ... And when they [volunteers] come on I just try to share with them, and now there are certain shows or programs that I won't work on. Anything that's contrary to Christ, I'm not gonna work on it. I mean it's just that everybody knows that and I've helped a man put his starter up. He was a program -- his program was not with Christ but I helped him put his starter on. I ain't gonna help him with his program though [laughing]. But his choke broke down and I helped him with his starter [laughing]. Crawled right up under it and helped him with it, but I'm not gonna help him with his program. (B6)

Tom is indicating a separation of the personal from the ideological common to the data. However, while Tom refers to assisting personally someone with whom he disagrees ideologically, most respondents note personality differences in the negative—when the differences involve conflicting personality traits.

The discussion of tolerance of personalities involves two aspects:

- **Tolerating difficult personalities**: refers to some obnoxious personalities found at the public access facility

- **Mechanisms of personality tolerance**: refers to the techniques adopted by respondents that allow them to coexist with difficult personalities
Tolerating Difficult Personalities. While differences in beliefs are protected by the First Amendment, there is no such dogma related to accepting personality differences, particularly annoying personality traits of producers that make life more difficult for the crew members.

The result is that most respondents did not seem to feel the necessity of tolerating the egos or work habits of individuals they considered difficult. Daniel expresses the problem rather succinctly:

Daniel: ... You find a few of the people down there to be very much of a pain. I guess that's the easiest way to say that. (b5P5a)

Elliot describes the same situation. In his case, he addresses the problems with ego-driven individuals, while accepting their right to be involved in public access:

Elliot: ... There are some people involved in ACTV, and I have to be a little tolerant because it's a public access, and I guess it's their right to be involved, but they have some gigantic egos; and I'm not talking about a particular ... but a group of people. One of them spent a great deal of time in a meeting telling us how most of us were not proficient enough, and I have never seen a guy who can goof up a studio as badly as he can. (Gl, Significant Access Experience)

Note that Elliot is defending the right of difficult individuals to be involved in public access, not their right to annoy others with their personalities.

Thea describes the problem of difficult individuals from the point of view of a crew member. She addresses a common problem referred to by most respondents: ego-driven, unorganized producers who waste the time of their crews:
Thea: ... I can think of a lot of times there was wasted energy. When I helped volunteer on some programs and the producer wouldn't show with his guests and you're standing there and you had taken all this time to set up the program and get things ready. And you know, nothing sends me to the edge faster than telling me that this time was wasted. So when some producers are prima donnas or on an ego trip and I think that OK, let's face it. When you do your own TV program or any program, and we are all guilty of this, this is like a narcissist thing. It feeds this ego and some people it's just -- they turn into a monster and their ego goes over the edge and you swear they're a movie star. They treat other people like peons and you are there to serve them and they have temper tantrums and they yell and that's not the way that environment is supposed to be set up, or they mistreat staff and yell at the staff in front of the other producers. That's not an environment conducive to being creative and helping out people.... (B5)

Denise describes the problem of difficult individuals from the point of view of a producer counting on individuals to show up for their crew assignments:

Denise: I have learned one thing, and I really did not realize it until I went to cable access. There are people that will tell you they will do something and have no intentions of doing it, have no intentions or if they do do it they'll take their good time and you are -- there are people that do not give their word and you're thinking as a new producer this person is gonna show up and help me or this person is -- we're gonna do this or that together and they have no intentions but you're too naive to know that they're not telling the truth. You're expecting somebody to show up to help you with your studio time because maybe you're the one that's the talent that's in front of the camera and you're expecting them to show up to be your camera person and they don't show up or you show up and you've asked the crew to come and they just don't show up. Because remember it is all volunteer. You're not paying them. So if they don't show up you can't blow your stack or anything at them because they are doing you a favor. So it's hard because people -- and then
people commit themselves "Oh yes I want to work with you on your show. I love this idea" blah, blah, blah, and you never see them again, and that’s the story of cable access. (b1P5a)

Daniel describes the depths to which personality clashes can descend. For him, the arguments regarding studio policy seem politically based, and are frustrating:

Daniel: ... I get a little frustrated and I tend to get burned out a little bit on some of these things when it is all political motivation more than you know ... I just don’t like the political fights. They got — one time they got into name-calling. It was she was a Jew bitch and he was some faggot. I don’t -- you know they were just calling names like this and I -- hell, I don’t need that. That doesn’t help you relax, you know. It gets tensions and then she wanted to go to the cable commission to see if she could get rid of the people on staff, you know, and who said what. You know she called up one time and wanted to know what the exact conversation was about me and the one guy that came in and said "It’s 9:00. You have to get off the air now." She took all these notes and took down the notes of what everyone else had said and compared them and was gonna form a formal complaint and all this stuff. Hell, that’s you know -- start the show 10 minutes earlier, you know [laughing]. She won’t do that [laughing]. So it is very political oriented.... (b8P1a)

The respondents all agree that such conflicts take the fun out of the entire access experience. The methods by which these instances are dealt with is described below.

Mechanisms of Personality Tolerance. The data indicate that, although respondents may disagree about the desirability of participating on programs with which they have ideological differences, most respondents seemed to set personal parameters in order to cope with difficult
Thea's solution of avoidance is similar to the technique of avoidance used to resolve the problem of conflicting beliefs:

Thea: ... I got turned off a little bit. I mean I'd go down there every couple of months, but it was the egos down there and people fighting and bickering over small things. It kind of got to me. I couldn't stand why people were being so narcissistic and having temper tantrums; I thought that was so unprofessional that you were all artists working there and were under the same roof, and we should respect each other. People literally screaming and stomping their feet -- and I thought this is ridiculous, you know, to be in that environment. They just need guidelines for people on how to behave, and I'm a behavior manager, and I work with people ... it's on a different level, and that turns me off so many times; so I go down there in strange hours when nobody's there and shut myself in a room, but that's the thing that turned me off. (G4, Burned Out)

Noreen has also found her own solution to the problem of producers who waste her time: she sets a time limit for her crew participation and leaves at the end of that time:

Noreen: ... But when I am not the technical director I try to ignore them because I will just tell people that I have to leave after two hours. I have another commitment. I'm gonna leave, and if you're not done I'm leaving. So in the beginning I would stay. If it took them another half hour I'd stay another half hour, but now I say no, I have made a two-hour commitment, if you're not done I'm leaving. I'm sorry but I'm not telling you you can't stay. I just can't stay. And so that's been making me feel better. (b12P5a)

Tolerance and the First Amendment

The discussion above indicates that almost all of the producers in this study construct tolerance within the
traditional framework of the First Amendment, as discussed in chapter 2. One perspective within this framework views freedom of expression as an ends in itself, necessary for human self-fulfillment, rather than as a means to achieve a quality of ideas within the "marketplace of ideas" (Emerson 1970; Ruggles 1994). The constant reference to freedom of expression as an individual "right" is indicative of this construction on the part of the producers.

Some scholars within the traditional perspective argue that the freedom of speech mandate is less to ensure the development of the individual and more to guarantee that truth will emerge from the social discourse (Meiklejohn 1948; Lippmann 1939). As discussed in chapter 2, only recently have access proponents followed Meiklejohn and Lippmann in calling for the quality of ideas for the social good over quantity of ideas for individual self-expression. There is little evidence that indicates the respondents in this study viewed public access within Emerson's (1970) framework of a long-range social good that might include a restriction of short-term individual advantage (10).

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15 This is in keeping with Good's "thoroughly integrative view" of pluralist assumptions of power (1989), which is drawn from Lukes's "one-dimensional view" of power (1974), as discussed in chapter 2.

16 These include Aufderheide (1992), Blau (1992b), and Devine (1990, 1992a, 1992b).
Conclusions: Tolerance

The discussion above indicates that, while tolerance of opposing ideas because of freedom of speech guarantees may be portrayed in a positive light by producers, the practice of allowing others to voice their ideas and opinions actually involves a great deal of inner and outer turmoil on the part of the respondents. This conflict is handled through a complex set of practices, often involving disassociation.

The data indicate that the ACTV volunteer system is important in promoting contact among access participants, necessitating the development of a high degree of tolerance of conflicting ideas by producers.

While a degree of tolerance may be extended to ideological differences, personalities are not protected by the First Amendment. The respondents do not view offending personalities from the perspective of rights of expression; acceptance and endurance of difficult personalities is much lower than that accorded to ideological differences.

The data indicate that respondents are constructing freedom of speech as an individual right rather than as a social good. Thus, they are favoring a view of the First Amendment that sees human expression as an end in itself, rather than a means to a greater goal of public discourse.
Throughout this chapter, we have been following the map provided by the public access vision and summarized in the following formula:

media literacy ---> media demystification = empowerment (awareness of self, others, and society; action to change relationships in these areas)

The discussion of tolerance has focused on a relatively discordant aspect of others in evidence throughout the data, where respondents identified and endured ideologies and personalities in conflict with their own. More harmonious constructions of others by producers also are in evidence throughout the data; these are discussed below.

4. Community

While the tolerance described above defines a perspective of others primarily from a conflict orientation, the theme of community refers to a sense of belonging to a cohesive group of individuals, usually with a common sense of purpose. The data suggest that a sense of community is a common outcome of the public access experience on the part of the producers.

Community involves a perception of others from the perspective of the producer, and the individual in relationship to these others. As such, it entails areas of the empowerment chart addressed during the previous discussion of tolerance. In that section it was noted that a greater percentage of respondents placed heavy emphasis in
the row of "others" than any of the areas of focus (Tables 7 and 8). In addition, the greatest emphasis by respondents across the entire empowerment chart was judged to be talk related to others as the row intersects the column of the personal domain (66.7%, Table 8).

The references to others described in the discussion of community considers producer relationships with crewmates, access participants, and viewers. These are addressed below in the following subthemes:

- **Community within the production crew**: refers to the sense of camaraderie and fellowship with the people working together on the production

- **Community within public access**: refers to the sense of camaraderie and fellowship with other people inside ACTV

- **Community with viewers**: refers to a bond with the viewers of the public access program or programs

"Community": An Overview

Contemporary use of the term "community" is problematic. Williams (1976) notes that community is defined most often as an attribute (e.g., a sense of common identity) rather than as an object (e.g., a strictly delineated geographic area). As an attribute, "community" is a "warmly persuasive word," always used favorably (76). Like "motherhood" and "apple pie," it evokes warm, pleasant feelings.

Such is the use of the term within the data. Producers referred to "community" as an attribute more often than as a
geographic area. Within each of the subthemes of community within the production crew, community within public access, and community with the audience, producers reinforce Williams’s (1976) notion that "community" is not used in the negative. To the respondents, a "community" evokes warm, nurturing, pleasant, uplifting feelings. To the producers, although people may disagree within the community, there is no argument or conflict.

Bart provides an example of this usage of community. In this instance he is referring to the sense of community within the ACTV community:

Bart: ... it hit me at the pyramid awards -- there was such a diversity of people there. And they are all coming together; and everyone’s nice to everyone. And I don’t know, it seems like a pseudo-utopia because you have the religious programming, atheists -- totally opposite views, but everyone’s always nice to one another and courteous. It seems like a little community in itself where no one’s critical of one another. They’ll say what they think, but everyone respects others’ opinions.... that’s how I see it -- some community where you can be yourself and no one’s going to disrespect you even if they totally disagree with you. (F3, Access Vision)

Bart exemplifies the use of the term "community" by the respondents in this study. His usage of "pseudo-utopia" to describe the situation implies a warm place where people may disagree but where courtesy dictates that no overt conflict take place. It is this construction of community that is generally at play within discussions of community and the production crew, the access facility, and the viewers.
Community Within the Production Crew

Community within the production crew refers to a sense of camaraderie and fellowship among the people working together on a production. Thea, a dropout, describes such a situation as she relays her positive experience working as a part of a good production team:

Thea: ... I thought it was a help that the staff went along and this other intern went along because the three of us hitting off each other ... it created a nice circle of -- I don't know how you'd put it but -- it was just we were building off each other and it was a great experience.... ... We balanced each other out. We were a good mix....

... It makes you want to search out other people more in public access that have things to offer, to work together with. (b1P4a)

Thea's description above fits the definition used to define "community" among a production crew: a sense of bonding and fellowship. The experience left her with the desire to work with other people at ACTV.

Pierre, also a dropout producer, provides a more specific example of how the sense of community operates within the production group:

Pierre: Now, more specifically, I worked down there for almost two years before I produced my own program; and it was at that time I began to pool all the different people that I had been working for those two years, and have them working with me on production, and that was really exciting to see how people come together and put their talents and see this whole thing go from concept to cablecast. That was a real high, being able to put that whole thing together.

... You cannot do video very easily by yourself. You really need a group of people to work together. The best situations are when people have certain strengths, and you find out
what they are, and you put them where they do the best. People who are really interested in audio, you put them on sound. People who can do some scriptwriting, you get them to do that; and you find out all these different talents, and you marshall those talents into a program. That was exciting, because everyone was committed. Everyone was interested in their part of this whole work really well. (P4, Significant Experience)

Pierre seems to be referring to a sense of synchronicity that appears to result from a well-integrated production team that is "clicking" together. The sense of community exemplified by Thea and Pierre above is supported by Trent, a recovering addict. In this case, Trent describes how the crew’s support helped him during an intense inner struggle against his addiction while they were working on an antidrug program on crack cocaine:

Trent: I was surrounded by people who knew my struggle with the disease, the addiction, of this addiction [to crack cocaine]. What they very much knew [was] that I played a major element as far as an important role involved in helping the process of getting this piece done because I knew the exact ramifications that an addict goes through. That I would have brought at that time, I did bring, a reality, an experience, of experience, that would give authenticity to the piece. ... [being surrounded by these people] was helpful to me personally, on a spiritual level.... (b9P4a)

The warm sense of community that is represented above by Pierre, Thea, and Trent stands in sharp contrast to the conflicts described above in the discussion of tolerance.

17 Pierre’s comment is related also to the discussion of tolerance earlier in this chapter. Tolerance is based, in part, on pragmatism: people need each other to produce a program.
The data indicate that a crew composed of people of similar political interests may be better able to sustain a sense of community than a crew composed of politically dissimilar persons. Noreen explains the importance of having people of similar political views working together on a production:

Noreen: ... a lot of people who felt the same way I did were working on the show so as soon as you say well I don't know maybe you shouldn't do this like three other people would say what do you mean you're not gonna do this? So having like-minded people work on your show is really good.... Because they give you the moral support that you need when you might be sticking your neck out a little or a lot. (b7P4a)

Noreen's comment suggests that the sense of community may be linked to the cohesiveness of a group that is moving toward a common goal. In Noreen's case it involves creating programs that contain an element of social activism. This relates to the discussion of "making a difference" later in this chapter.

Community Within Public Access

Community within public access refers to the sense of camaraderie and fellowship among the people using the facilities of ACTV. In the previous discussion of tolerance, Thea described the "carnival" she observed one night at ACTV as various groups moved in and out of the facility (B6). Bart has previously described the sense of community he felt at an awards presentation, where factions within ACTV mixed pleasantly (F3, Access Vision).
Roslyn, a dropout producer, also describes moments at ACTV when groups occasionally at odds were working together:

Roslyn: ... I think anything we did outside the studio ... brought the volunteers together. You became a cohesive group. The staff -- together; you became friends that way. It wasn't them versus us; it wasn't that division -- everyone worked together and we had fun doing it.

I think the result is the programs we got were very good programs because once you got back to the studio, everyone worked on them there, too, in the editing classes. It became real community TV as far as I was concerned. It wasn't everyone having their own little agenda. Sometimes down there, that tends to happen -- well this is mine -- etc.

I sometimes don't think there's much community in community TV in Columbus. That's why I remember all those experiences when we were away from the studio and were very visible.... (F4, Significant Experience)

Here Roslyn indicates that conflict among individuals or groups snuffs out a sense of community, a notion that was introduced during the previous discussion of tolerance. Roslyn's comment also suggests that as the factions within ACTV move out to the broader community, they may see themselves not as representatives of a particular program reflecting a particular ideological perspective, but as representatives of public access itself. At such a time, the tenets of public access may prove stronger than the canon of individual or group ideologies. George reinforces such an interpretation:

George: ... When you take it to the community level, I think it's great when you find other people doing not the same thing, but going in the same direction with the same medium, it's empowering to have the same people with the same view, trying to release that critical eye on
society, on ourselves, on the community as a whole.... (F3, Access Visions)

In such an instance, it would seem that the "like-minded people" of which Noreen spoke (b7P4a) have broadened from the crew to include those using the access facility and supporting the access creed.

Community With Viewers

Community with viewers refers to the sense of camaraderie and fellowship among the creators and viewers of public access programs. Discussion of community with viewers involves three subthemes, explored below:

- **The personal audience**: refers to the producers’ perception of the viewers as active individuals participating in the creation of programs
- **Consideration of audience**: refers to the attention paid by producers to viewers of their programs
- **Assumption of large audience**: refers to the belief on the part of producers that a large number of people are viewing their programs

The Personal Audience. The personal audience refers to the producers’ perception of the viewers as active individuals who are participating in the creation of programs. The data indicate that most of the producers in this study perceive the viewers of their access programs to be highly selective individuals who are actively engaged in their television viewing and who often make themselves known to the producers.
This contrasts with traditional research related to television viewers, which has often conceptualized the audience as an amorphous, passive "mass," rather than as individuals actively selecting and making sense of television programs (Ang 1990). The "personal audience" suggested by the data is the essence of the subtheme of community with viewers.

Producers rely on the interaction with viewers for encouragement. At times, the producer will manipulate elements of a program specifically to motivate viewers to respond. Alfred provides an example of this in which he purposely makes mistakes in his show so his viewers will respond to his programs:

Alfred: ... I would like for my audience to respond to me because my -- you can see my credits, the way I have them set up. I didn't put edges on them and it's like you don't have to look real hard but it is kind of faint. So I figured if they look hard enough they can see who did it and they can write in or call me and tell me [laughing], You need to do this. You need to make it so you can see it. You know I'm hoping to get that response. Every time it was an experiment and you know I like to think that I'm getting better every time. See, I couldn't even do computer graphics at first so I was satisfied in getting these up. They should be showing in a couple of weeks. I should know something anytime. (b2F4a)

Here is the essence of the "community audience": a very personalized construction of audience as part of a community, where the individuals making up the collective audience are expected to respond to the program. This
creates a synergic loop, and the feedback from his audience then motivates Alfred to work harder on his program:

Alfred: It [audience response] makes me work harder. It makes me strive to do better, give them something else to talk about. (b12P4a)

... It helps knowing that when people are responsive to what I'm trying to do that I can get that positive feedback, and it makes me keep going with it. I don't drop the idea. When I think that is not working I'll drop it. It has been working so far since February I believe, and I haven't let it go yet. (b9P4a)

Charlie also seeks feedback from her viewers. She deliberately puts creative video behind the program schedule to attract the attention of viewers:

Charlie: ... I thought well, maybe this might make them stop and in stopping to see what's happening behind it, then they are at the same time they're gonna hear these bands and this music and that while they're watching this other visual stuff they're gonna see these words scrolling up too and they're gonna start looking at that and then they'll start seeing these other programs and all, well that's "Clintonville Confidential" on Tuesday at 2. Maybe ... it's all gonna work together and help all the people and their shows too. That it is all related. And it has happened. I have seen it happen. I thought it might happen but it really did (b6P4a).

The producers' construction of the audience as part of a creating/viewing community seems to be centered around the producer as creator of the program. The producer invites viewers to participate, and when they do the producer works harder and goes further to evoke a response.

Throughout his interview, Alfred repeatedly stated, "I have created audiences" (B6). His comments suggest this loop, which centers around the energy he puts into the
creation of his program, and which is strengthened by contributions from his audience.

Alfred: ... [public access] gave me the power to know that I can create audiences and you know I've been recognized by the audiences I have created out of it, with the show that I made up. And before that happened I was a different person. So now I'm a producer. I've got that show. I got people that want to see more of the show. So that's the impact it has made for me. (B9)

Charlie is at the center of a loop of her own creation. In her case, her program involves a community composed of local nightclubs, bands, music stores, music critics, and music aficionados:

Charlie: So we've pulled the whole community together with the bars that are playing -- that the bands are playing at. Some of their record agents. I have one of the local music stores that also supports the local music and a couple of the different [shops] -- like a guitar shop and an audio-visual shop to help underwrite the program. So at the same time, this is the whole community all working together to put this, to bring this about. You know, even though I am the producer and I am getting all the credit, I couldn't do it without all of them and so they're all, they're all working and they're all supporting it. And they didn't even know whether or not I could do it [laughing]. (B10)

Based on the examples provided by Charlie and Alfred, the personal nature of the viewing community seems to originate from a creative sharing between the producer and the rest of the creating and viewing community. The audience is personal because they are known to the producer and participates in the creation of the program. Hence, the program does become an interactive community production. In addition, the producer receives the knowledge and self-
esteem that come from the understanding that he or she "created the audience" along with the program.

**Consideration of Audience.** Consideration of audience refers to the attention paid by producers to viewers of their programs, whether or not they construct the viewers of their programs as personal.

In a study by Fuller (1984), producers indicated they did not often consider their viewing audience when creating their programs (155).¹ This is decidedly not the case with the respondents in this study. Respondents often described the viewers of access programs as the primary reason the producers were creating programs. Meredith provides one such example:

Meredith: ... I would like people to see the good work that I've put into my production. I'm not out there to produce just for myself. (B1P5a)

Tom also exemplifies the manner in which most producers consider the audience for their programs:

Tom: Well when you do a program you always want to think that you're not doing it just for yourself. You feel like that's what it is for. That's what public access is for, I believe. It is for the community.... But a lot of times, yeah, you expect for your program to have some type of impact on the community. (B10)

¹ A related study by Hardenberg (1985) investigated audience and producer motivations at four public access channels in Connecticut. Some of her findings are loosely related, but not directly germane to this study.
Note that Tom also includes the expectation of an impact on the viewing audience in his consideration of viewers. This is a connection with the theme of "making a difference" that will be examined in detail later in this chapter.

Noreen also provides an example of the attention paid to viewers by the respondents. In her case she recognizes that part of the show is making something people want to watch:

Noreen: ... Part of the show is not just getting the information across, it is making it that people want to watch it, and to do that you have to do things with timing, with interest and all these kind of things. And I think I can do that better.

... it would make a more interesting show that people would want to watch, and my goal is always to have a show that people will watch and learn from.

... [then] they'll get new information and will make them think. Get those grassroots people off the couch into the street [laughing]. (b4P6a)

Note that Noreen, like Tom, also expects her program to have an impact on viewers. Noreen hopes to motivate her audience to engage in social action, a goal considered more fully later in this chapter.

Noreen and Tom, as well as Charlie and Alfred, exemplify the kinds of audience considerations producers make while constructing their programs.

Assumption of Large Audience. Assumption of large audience refers to the belief on the part of producers that
a large number of people are viewing their programs. It is clear from the data that the respondents believe there is a large number of viewers watching their programs. The producers base this assumption primarily on the amount of feedback and recognition received from the viewers, often citing instances of being recognized by strangers on the street after appearing on their public access program. The following examples are typical of the strong reactions to a suggestion that perhaps few people watched the public access channel; these are drawn from the group interviews:

Leo: I don’t know that then many people will admit to watching. I live in Dublin with a lot of yuppies, engineers, etc. It’s amazing the number of people that once the ice is broken and you talk about "Clinton Confidential," and people will say, "Oh yeah, I saw that." Once it’s broken, people will admit to watching some of these things.... (F1, Access Vision)

Anthony: ... [P]eople watch it, which I’ve always known since the beginning; even when people make certain statements that no one watches public access -- that’s wrong. (F2, Significant Experience)

Paul: ... [P]eople definitely watch it. I learned that when I started as a new pastor of this little church. There was about 80 of us on Sunday mornings, 40 of whom were 15 and younger, and they all had seen the cable show. They all knew this guy’d been on TV, even the ones that hadn’t heard it from the ones that had. It definitely does get watched and it does have an impact. (F2, Access Vision)

Thea: ... People do watch public access. I thought that maybe it wasn’t true; that maybe no one watched public access, but -- It’s the strangest thing. I don’t show myself in front of the camera; I show other people, but I’ve had people who’ve been in my videos stopped on the street. I took my car in once to get fixed, and
one of my videos was called new distributor cap, and the mechanic said will you love me if I fix your car, which is like -- one of the choruses in the song, so he recognized my name. So I'm really amazed that some people -- it is watched! (F4, Access Vision)

Bill: Well, mainstream masses—no they don't (watch public access), but I was on my show and had a bank teller recognize me, and people on campus.... when my show was on, they always had my show tuned in in our newsroom, so I knew people watch. (F4, Access Vision)

These comments point to a serious shortcoming in an analysis of public access channels: there is little data available that addresses the viewership of the channels. As a result, anecdotal evidence such as that provided above is the primary manner in which the viewership of public access programming is judged.

The data presented during this discussion of community with viewers describe a relationship with the viewers of

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19 Fuller (1994) details several studies of public access channels over the past two decades, indicating viewership levels from 3% to 45%. Fuller concludes by noting that survey research involving community television should emphasize trends in national viewership (15). The ACM reports that a study of 78 cable television markets revealed viewership levels from 31% to 40% for various types of access programming ("Alliance" 1994).

20 It is important to note that a focus on the levels of public access viewership shifts attention away from the process orientation of access as an electronic First Amendment, and toward traditional concepts of mass media that emphasize media product and the size of the viewing audience. As Devine (1990) argues, public access is not about television or programming, but deals with speech, communication, and interaction (17-18).

That said, the producers in this study believe their message is distributed to a large audience, and they would prefer to see the size of that audience increase.
public access that is personal in nature—based on recognition within a community of interests.

Conclusions: Community

The discussion of community has supported Williams's (1976) notion that the term "community" is always used in the positive and usually refers to an attribute rather than an object. The warm construction of "other" in this discussion contrasts the more discordant perspective reflected in the analysis of tolerance.

In the warm glow of community, respondents looked favorably upon associations within the production crew, the access facility, and the viewing audience. The data indicated that producers have a personal relationship with viewers, and that these viewers are considered participants in the creation of access programs. The producers consider the number of viewers for these programs to be rather large.

Chapters 1 and 2 discussed the pluralist tenets underlying public access and the First Amendment. One of these precepts is the myth of individualism, in which the individual constantly struggles against the collective for survival. Darvin and Clark (1993) and Streeter (1990) argue that this is a false dichotomy—that both the individual and the collective depend upon each other for identity and growth, and that the two are inseparable.21

21 As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, critical (continued...
The data support this idea that such a dichotomy is false. The relationships among and within the themes of "media savvy," "it's personal," "tolerance," and "community" suggest that a dialectical relationship exists between individuals and the collective. The nature of this relationship appears to be as follows:

As individuals come together to create a program, they become integrated into a production crew, involving discussions of the division of labor within the theme of media savvy. Within this group, individuals learn about themselves and others, as described in the theme "it's personal." A result of the coming together of somewhat like-minded individuals for the purpose of creation seems to be that many producers move beyond their personal worlds to a bonding with others that is often uplifting in nature, as described above in the discussion of community.

When this bonding is thwarted, individuals seem to pull back to differing degrees from the collective grouping, as is evidenced from the earlier discussion of tolerance. An encounter with opposing ideological beliefs seems to impede the development of the fullest sense of community, but does not necessarily cause individuals to disassociate themselves entirely from the group. This seems due, in part, to the challenges to the canon of individualism also focus on pluralist assumptions that power is shared equally within society, and that the individual, not the collective, is the fundamental unit of social organization.

21(...continued)
sanctuary offered the individual by the First Amendment dogma. However, personality conflicts often do cause individuals to pull back and disassociate themselves from the collective grouping.

The sense of community is often related to a sense of accomplishment on the part of the production team, frequently associated with a program that in some way affects people or society. This involves a changing of societal relationships, which follows the final step in the empowerment formula:

media literacy → media demystification → empowerment (awareness of self, others, and society; action to change relationships in these areas)

Action to change relationships related to society is the subject of the next theme: "making a difference."

5. Making a Difference

Making a difference refers to the sense that an individual's and/or group's actions are important; that change at the societal level can be effected. Making a difference also refers to actions taken to change relationships at the societal level.

Other themes have addressed issues of personal change (particularly media savvy and "it's personal") and the dynamics of change within the group context (particularly tolerance and community). Making a difference is related to the sensitizing concept of societal change, as directed by
the critical pedagogy represented by Paulo Freire. As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, Freirean pedagogy considers the highest level of empowerment to be action that addresses power relationships in society, based on self-reflection. These aspects of Freirean empowerment are represented by the column of the societal domain on the empowerment chart.

The quantitative analysis in chapter 4 concludes that the least amount of talk by respondents falls within the societal domain of empowerment (1.9, Table 1; 1.5, Table 2; 0.4, Table 3). There is judged to be appreciably less talk of action than cognition within the societal domain at every point of the empowerment chart (Tables 2 and 3, 5 and 6, 8 and 9). Most dramatic is the comparison of percentage of respondents with a heavy amount of talk related to action (0.0%, Table 9) with the percentage related to cognition (77.8) across the entire societal domain.

While it would appear from the quantitative analysis that little action judged as societal change is taking place, that which does occur is interesting and meaningful. The data suggest that Freirean empowerment may focus unrealistically on societal change as a goal, rather than on societal change as a process that begins with individual and collective transformation. This will be discussed below through the following aspects of making a difference:

- Making a difference at the societal level: refers to actions by producers to directly address inequities at the societal level
The process of social change refers to access participation as a part of a continuum on which social change is facilitated.

Making a Difference at the Societal Level

Making a difference at the societal level refers to actions taken by producers to directly address inequities at the societal level. Within the societal domain, the area containing the greatest amount of talk judged as action is within the row of media (0.6, Table 3; 55.6%, Table 6). Not surprisingly, this action generally takes the form of programs designed by the respondents with a specific impact in mind. Examples of this have been presented during earlier discussions in this chapter. They include the following:

- Noreen created a program on the homeless when the local newspaper had no stories about homelessness (B3).
- Tom produces a program with the stated purpose of addressing problems in society (b4Pla).
- Thea addresses questions in her programs that are ignored by the mainstream media (b3P4a).
- Trent created a program with the express purpose of influencing city government to restructure the three access channels (B5).

The programs mentioned above are similar in that they indicate a desire on the part of the producer to address perceived inequities in society. Noreen, a self-described activist, exemplifies the impact producers generally hope their programs will have on their viewers. In her case, programs are designed to get the viewers to the phones:
Noreen: ... then you know that they have responded -- that they are not just sitting on the couch watching and waiting for the next commercial. When I do shows, when I do my own shows, I usually have people call. Like they'll call the breast, the cancer society. They'll call the legislator. They'll call this person or that person. I never have them call me because I'm putting the show together for some other issue....

At first glance, the relatively few instances of overt attempts to address inequities in society might indicate that the empowerment vision of public access is not viable at its highest level: that of social change. However, such a rigid application of the definition of empowerment would miss the complex subtleties at play within the data.

The data indicate that social change may not be rooted solely in awarenesses and actions that address societal inequities, as Freire outlines. Instead, there appears to be a dialectical relationship between the individual and collective that suggests that a process orientation toward social change may be more helpful in understanding the nature of such change. This is explored below.

The Process of Social Change

The process of social change refers to access participation as a part of a continuum through which social change is facilitated. While some of the respondents' comments may have been judged as talk related to action to change societal relations, this does not imply the producers necessarily portray themselves as working for social change.
In fact, at least one producer insisted her access participation was not based on any vision of societal change:

Roslyn: I don’t know if anyone’s really that deep into it, like really change, but I see ACTV as more of an entertainment. I don’t see anyone trying to change the world. (F4, Access Vision)

This notion was contested by at least one other producer. Paul believes that the lack of focus on overt social change did not necessarily rule out the possibility that societal change was taking place:

Paul: ... Even if you aren’t consciously changing things by their participation, they [public access producers] change the world. Just by their choosing to put that message on the air, and that message going out, people are going to change things -- no I don’t agree with that -- or I guess I do, and tell friends -- it’s like throwing a pebble in the pond.

Every story is a pebble -- and you can’t even judge where those waves go. Simply the fact that those stories were told -- and without access TV they would not have been -- the world’s been changed by what’s been said. It’s like any other criticism -- to a degree -- how much, how watched is it, how much do people learn? How much is the world changed?... (F2, Access Vision)

Paul’s comment follows Gaventa’s argument (1980) that all actions that break a state of passivity and quiescence are a challenge to the status quo (209). Drawing from this logic, their very participation in public access places access participants in a position in which they challenge

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22 Gaventa draws from Freire; both authors are discussed more fully in chapter 2.
the authority of the traditional media structure—who produces, and who receives, media messages.

While this is a broader definition of empowerment than that used in this study, it does conceptualize access participation within a process orientation. Participation in public access may provide a step toward the potential for social change. Gaventa (1980) describes this process when he states that

Because they have the potential to serve as a catalyst in this dynamic process, many community action or community education programmes [sic] may be more significant for social change than they at first appear. (209)

Such would seem to be the case with participation within public access. Discussions earlier in this chapter have referred to a process by which producers seem to move outward from the self to others and to society. Many of the respondents began their work with access television with very specific individual purposes in mind. After they began their involvement, they became aware of a broader framework of access within society in which their participation was significant. For example, Charlie, who produces a music program, began to see public access as really making a difference in people’s lives.

Charlie: ... that was a big revelation to me -- when that happened that I really looked at public access as being a lot more important than just a bunch of neighbors and friends wanting to go down and be on TV and talk about things that really did do more for the public as a whole. (B3)

... I think it might have given me maybe a little bit more meaning to what I was doing down
there. That it was beyond just having fun, just coming down to have fun to record the bands and put my show together. That it was a little bit more beyond that. (b3P7a)

... it really blew me away [laughing]. It was one of those times you know. I think it really made a difference in my life -- showing me that the importance of public access was a lot more than what I thought. (B4)

Meredith also exemplifies the movement from the personal to the broader framework that the data indicate is characteristic of the access experience. She recognizes the necessity of being informed of public issues:

Meredith: ... I learned at that time that up to that point I had pretty much -- was happy to be with [Channel] 21 but had taken it for granted. That it’s not enough to go down there and bring in your tapes that you had just shot on location and start editing and submit them, that that’s not enough. You have to really read a lot, be informed, read the newspapers because there are things out there that can threaten public access.

... This is helpful to me because now that I know I am also aware that I know about it. If I know about it I can do something about it.

... Well, that than leads me to find ways that I can empower myself and other people, and if we’re empowered we can make public access even stronger and better, and if it’s stronger and better then that means that our society is that much richer. (b7P4a)

Notice the survival element involved in Meredith’s comments. She is describing the necessity of being informed in order to protect what she considers an important outlet: public access cable television. This notion of survival has been identified within all the themes discussed in this chapter: media savvy, "it’s personal," tolerance, community, and now "making a difference."
Charlie and Meredith exemplify the potential for social change offered by public access. If Charlie's and Meredith's expanded awarenesses regarding the role of public access and its potential to change lives is viewed strictly from the Freirean perspective, there is little evidence of the highest level of empowerment: action to change power relationships in society.

However, if societal change is conceptualized as a process, as suggested by Gaventa (1970), the expanded awarenesses described by Charlie and Meredith begin to take on added significance. Their reflections become part of a continuum of societal change that begins at a personal level. Here is a connection with the personal described earlier in this chapter and which is supported by Sense-Making theory.23

The connection between the personal and the societal is indicated by Daniel, who describes the impacts of his access participation on society in personal terms:

Daniel: ... I guess I'd have to have difficulties saying that I've seen impacts on society in general. Unless I consider the impact that it's had on me, my feelings of society. See, it has opened a lot of doors. It got me in a lot of places I normally would not have gone, and done a lot of things I normally wouldn't do. It opened a few eyes of mine. I don't know how society is affected by what I do other than I make up society eventually or enough of us do.

23 As noted in chapter 3, the protocol for individual interviews used in this study questioned respondents about the impact their participation in access had on their lives, their community, their city, and society as a whole.
... I don't know that I have made that much change in the community or the Columbus area or the society in general, other than maybe have changed some of my outlooks on the community and I guess as a whole we're all part of that society so what changes I make may not be great. But it does have some bearing on how I interface in with the rest of society which I would hope would have an impact....

... public access as far as I'm concerned has changed me which is part of society in what small little way I've got then that does change society to a point. There is a lot more of them than me [laughing].... (B12).

Daniel states repeatedly that his impact on society stems from the impact on himself, as a part of society. His comment directs attention again to the argument that the individual and the collective are not separate, but are interconnected (Dervin and Clark 1993; Streeter 1990).

Trent conspicuously describes his participation within access as part of larger process of social change:

Trent: ... everything is a process, everything is continuous, everything has its own expression, and in that vehicle of expression which is continuously moving, there comes out a public expression that we can put on the table and look at, and break it down, and dissect it and diagnose it, and give it back out to society and say, "Hey, here we are. This is us." And hope that people would look at the pros and cons of it, and learn from it, and be able to elevate, and go to a higher level. A higher life, a higher form of life. That would make this society better as a whole. (b12P1a)

The comments of Paul, Meredith, Charlie, Daniel, and Trent presented above reinforce the concept that societal change involves the individual and the collective simultaneously in a dynamic process.
Conclusions: Making a Difference

The discussion of making a difference has addressed instances of talk judged to reflect an attempt by producers to change power relations in society. There are a limited number of these episodes, as evidenced by the quantitative analysis in chapter 4. Utilizing the strictest Freirean test of empowerment—that of social change—access would seem to fail in its ability to effect change within the societal realm.

However, the data suggest that the process of change is immensely complex, involving individual and group transformations that may affect society. This discussion supports the notion that individuals and collectivities operate within a dialectical relationship, rather than in isolation from each other (Dervin and Clark 1993; Streeter 1990). The discussion advances a process perspective toward social change and examines public access in light of its potential to further change in power relationships.

The discussion of making a difference reinforces a notion introduced earlier in this chapter: that producers in this study exhibit a movement outward from the personal sphere to people they know within public access, and then to those with whom they are unfamiliar. As their personal worlds expand, the broader society in which they live is affected. This does not put an undue emphasis on the liberal democratic ideology of individualism. Rather it
eliminates the false dichotomy between conceptions of the individual and the collectivity, and instead posits a dynamic process of interaction between the individual and the collectivity.

This does not contradict Freire; it merely redirects attention away from the goal of societal change and toward the process by which this change takes place. Freire does not specifically address the necessity of action within the personal realm, although he alludes to it in his latest work (1993). However, self-reflectivity does imply at least a modest amount of a personal orientation—toward oneself and others.

The discussion in chapters 1 and 2 noted that public access cable television was created at a time when individuals and/or groups were seen to have little or no effect on institutions or society as a whole—particularly the institutions of the mass media. Public access was seen as a means of providing citizens with an electronic "voice" and encouraging citizens to participate in the workings of the society. The data indicate that access does encourage an expanded view of the world, as well as an active role in shaping that world.

The work of this chapter thus far has been to analyze the access vision of empowerment, utilizing the formula below:

\[
\text{media literacy} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{media demystification} = \text{empowerment (awareness of self, others, and
}\]
society; action to change relationships in these areas)

By investigating societal change through the discussion of making a difference, we have completed an analysis of the access vision of empowerment. This is the vision as stated by academics, access practitioners, industry executives, government officials, and social critics. The final section of this chapter investigates respondent visions of empowerment that fall slightly outside the "official" vision.

6. Alternative Visions of Access

Alternative visions of access refers to visions of public access expressed by producers that were not necessarily related to the institutional vision of public access informing this study. The themes discussed previously were directed by the sensitizing concepts of media literacy, media demystification, and empowerment. Alternative visions of access explores respondents' perspectives that fall outside the traditional goals of public access.

During the group and individual interviews, respondents were asked to talk about times when they noted that the established public access vision of empowerment was or was not working well. The individual interviewees also were
asked to voice their personal visions of public access. The responses from these portions of the individual interviews have been considered along with the entirety of a producer's talk throughout the in-depth interview. The results are snapshots of personal visions of public access television, as extrapolated from the talk of each of the nine individual interviewees. These personal visions are as follows:

- Charlie sees access as bringing people together, thereby emphasizing a sense of community.
- Noreen's vision emphasizes that access allows the "little people" to speak, resulting in a diversity of people and ideas in the media.
- Tom pictures access as allowing people off the street to get involved with television; he believes access should be in the hands of the public.
- Thea emphasizes a picture of access that allows a representation of as many different aspects of people as possible.
- For Denise, access presents a different perspective of the world than mainstream television, allowing her to see how other people think.
- Meredith sees access as a way to exercise her free speech rights; she uses it to get her messages out to people after numerous rejection letters from media organizations.
- Daniel's vision of access is working with people, helping others overcome their fear of the equipment, and in the process coming to a new understanding of people from different walks of life.

24 Discussion of these aspects of the individual and group protocols is found in chapter 3. Participants were asked to respond to statements related to the empowerment vision of public access; these statements are found in the group and individual protocols in Appendices A and B.
• For Trent, the access vision is a greater awareness of the processes and change associated with life and social change.

• For Alfred, access provides an inexpensive opportunity to obtain technical training and develop a career as a producer.

In general, these personal visions were judged to be encompassed within the framework of the access vision of empowerment, and have been included within the themes discussed throughout this chapter.

However, one of these personal visions stands apart from the traditional perspective provided by the access vision of empowerment and warrants particular attention in this section. The vision involves the following theme, which will be discussed below:

• **The economic frontier**: refers to a vision of access as a springboard for opportunity, usually involving an advancement in a career, or an entrepreneurial venture.

**The Economic Frontier**

The economic frontier refers to a vision of public access as a springboard for personal opportunity. This usually involves advancement in a career, or an entrepreneurial venture. Tom exemplifies a sense of the frontier aspects of public access:

Tom: ... It's the frontier again. The man has a chance to start from ground level and if he really and truly wants to go forth with it -- if he was commercial, being a commercialism and the commercial part, if he really and truly wants to put a good program together he could put a program together and maybe get it on CBS, ABC.... It all depends on what you do with it or what you want to
do with it or where you want to take it....

(b1P1a)

Tom is explicating the sense of access as the frontier, where the opportunities for personal advancement are determined only by the access participant. As determined from the data, this advancement takes two forms:

- **The economic frontier as career opportunity**: refers to the use of access to overcome societal barriers related to the development of a career.

- **The economic frontier as entrepreneurial opportunity**: refers to the use of access to overcome economic barriers.

**The Economic Frontier as Career.** The economic frontier as career opportunity refers to the use of access to overcome societal barriers related to the development of a career. This aspect was addressed earlier in this chapter when it was noted that some participants use access as a means to a media-related career ("it's personal"). That discussion focused on career opportunities as they related to life enrichment (Meredith b10P6a; Alfred E1; Bill G4, Significant Experience). Here, the focus is related more to the manner by which respondents see access as a means of furthering their career interests, and overcoming societal barriers in the process.

Alfred is the sole example of the economic frontier as career opportunity; his interview is rife with references that suggest he is using access to overcome economic and social barriers:
Alfred: ... outside of public access it would be pretty difficult for a guy of my economical background to be able to function in this capacity as a producer.... Any other time you have to have -- loan some money or some great friend or Daddy Warbucks-type person to keep you going.

... [T]hrough them a regular person can do on-hands training ... and it don't necessarily have to cost him a lot of money.... (B6)

Alfred's "on-hands training" allows him to gain experience that he could not otherwise afford. It allows him to sharpen his production skills and establish a career for himself as a video producer. The context of Alfred's entire interview suggests he is using public access to bridge the societal obstacles he has encountered. Here he describes how his success as a movie producer would be received by his family and friends:

Alfred ... It would be a great accomplishment for myself, for family members, friends, people who know me to see where I've come from to where I've gone. It's like the kid who's an athlete. Who everybody is seeing training while he was growing up. They'd see him going down the street and he has always got his football in his hand. He is always running, doing his training after he come home from practice and he's still practicing. And then one day he gets to the Superbowl and he always wanted to do that. So he has like reached that plateau. Or better yet, the athlete who makes it to the Olympics and reaches that goal. So in that sense I'm just trying to reach that goal. (b9P6a)

In his interview Alfred was not specific about his background. When asked if he saw connections between his life and the ideas he had been discussing, Alfred almost always replied in the affirmative, but declined to comment further.
While other producers have mentioned the career-enhancing aspects of their public access involvement ("it's personal"), Alfred is the only producer to suggest access may be used as a career opportunity that is related to societal inequities. The singular instance described above also sheds light on an additional aspect of the theme of the frontier: that of entrepreneurial opportunities.

The Economic Frontier as Entrepreneurial Opportunity.

The economic frontier as entrepreneurial opportunity refers to the use of access to overcome economic barriers and generate income through entrepreneurial ventures. This may take the form of self-promotion, hiring out one's services to another producer for a fee, or using access equipment to create a commercially oriented program. These latter two practices are prohibited by ACTV policies; access philosophy states that the access facilities exist for citizens to exercise their First Amendment rights to free speech and are not to be used for commercial gain. Producers may not charge one another for the use of their services, and all use of access equipment is to be used for the production of noncommercial programs used on the public access channel.25

25 The use of public access channels for economic gain is discussed by Stoney (1992), who warns of the growing number of access programs that are "semi-commercial and self-promotional in nature, . . . having little concern for the larger community" (5). It was for these programs that "leased access" channels were intended--channels set aside (continued...
The practices of hiring out services or producing commercial programs are not specifically mentioned by any of the respondents. However, the issue is suggested by the data. Note this comment by Alfred, which follows his discussion above regarding on-hands training:\textsuperscript{26}

Alfred: ... if you've done any research on the prices that telecommunications companies charge for what they do as far as producing things for people you have some idea the money I'm talking about. A small guy like me just can't afford it, but I could have better afford to go to a public access facility, pay their fees, use their equipment and get the same work done. (B6)

While Alfred does not say he uses public access for commercial production, his comments suggest an interpretation of community television that is beyond the traditional vision of access as an electronic guarantor of free speech rights.

The vision of access as entrepreneurial opportunity includes the use of video equipment for commercial purposes and for self-promotion. Robert and Donald provide examples of the latter: Robert's program is a version of his book, \textsuperscript{25}(...continued)

\hspace{1cm} by cable operators for entrepreneurial ventures. Stoney recommends strategies to keep access facilities focused on their promise of promoting public discourse in a democratic society.

\textsuperscript{26} Throughout his interview Alfred consistently referred to his use of access as a means of improving his personal and economic situation. He is the only producer to provide specific references to the issues discussed in this section. It is primarily Alfred who has stimulated my thoughts on access and its relationship to an economic vision of empowerment through career advancement and entrepreneurial practice.
which he sells for a living (F2, Introduction), while Donald uses his program to promote the people he represents in his talent agency. The television appearance of some of his clients has led to recording contracts (F3, First Involvement).^27

The conflict between access channel as promoter of public discourse and the use of the channel for private gain through entrepreneurial ventures is growing (Stoney 1992). The discussion above provides a context within which to frame the contest.

**Conclusions: Alternative Visions**

The discussion above has highlighted the personal visions of the individual interview participants and suggests the inclusion of these perspectives within the broader public access vision of empowerment. In particular, one viewpoint has been explored: that of the economic frontier.

The economic frontier as career opportunity and the economic frontier as entrepreneurial opportunity have been

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^27 Throughout my long involvement with community television, I have heard references by both access managers and community volunteers to the use of access facilities for commercial purposes. Understandably, it is not loudly discussed by those engaged in the practice. While the instances mentioned here fall within the public access guidelines, they are discouraged by access facilities as not in keeping with the "real" purpose of public access: to promote empowerment within the parameters provided by the First Amendment.
discussed here because they indicate an alternative vision of public access—one that raises an interesting dilemma within the vision of empowerment. Public access was intended to address societal injustices; the institution was intended to provide a grassroots forum for speech not dominated by a commercial system. Facilities and channels were set aside to provide the public the means by which to participate in the workings of the democracy. However, the structure of public access limits this participation to speech; some of the great inequities within society—those of economic opportunity and class—are not addressed within the current framework of public access.

The alternative vision of public access as the economic frontier of individual opportunity indicates that some producers have managed to utilize public access to address the question of economic opportunity. While the vision of the economic frontier is not widely voiced by respondents in this study, it is worth noting that the producers who did mention the quasi-entrepreneurial activities described above are members of a historically disadvantaged ethnic minority. The placement of value on access as site of economic opportunity stands in contrast to the traditional access vision of empowerment.

It is also worth noting that "participation" is again at issue here, as it was during the discussion of system media savvy and ACTV policies. That discussion addressed
the appropriate level of participation by producers within
the public access structure. The framing of participation
within the context of the economic frontier involves an
examination of the "appropriate societal inequities" that
are to be addressed by public access.

Summary of the Inductive Data Analysis

This chapter has focused on an inductive analysis
through an examination of patterns within the data,
organized as themes. These discussions have included the
quantitative findings presented in chapter 4.

Six themes were explored. Five of these themes—media
savvy, "it's personal," tolerance, community, and making a
difference—were directed by the sensitizing concepts within
the public access vision. The formula for this vision has
been stated as:

media literacy —> media demystification —
empowerment (awareness of self, others, and
society; action to change relationships in these
areas)

The final theme, alternative visions, originated from a
focus on the emphasis placed by respondents during the in-
depth interviews.

The findings of the inductive analysis of this chapter
are summarized below:

* All respondents are able to recognize and evaluate
program content, intent, and the technical elements
found within television programs. To a lesser degree,
respondents utilize many of these elements regularly in
the program-production process. Some respondents are
able to recognize and evaluate the symbolic meanings within television programs. Most respondents are able to recognize and evaluate the structure of media organizations and systems, as well as connections with larger social systems.

The findings support the claims of media education related to media literacy and demystification, and critical pedagogy's claims of the dialectic between the "reading" and "writing" of media literacy skills. The findings also suggest learning situations that may promote conscious reflection upon media skills.

- Most respondents have framed their access experience within the context of their personal lives. Respondents report a more positive self-image and less of a tendency toward stereotypic impressions of others, and they feel their lives have generally been enriched by their access experience.

- Survival plays an important role in motivating producers within the areas of production, personal, and societal participation.

- Producers construct a view of themselves and others partly within the framework of a sense of "community." The communities include the production group, the access facility, and the viewers of access programs. A stronger sense of community is experienced within groups sharing a common purpose.

- Producers construct a view of themselves and others partly within a framework of tolerance. Respondents develop tactics to overcome deep ideological and personal divisions within the access facility. Personal divisions are more likely than ideological divisions to cause producers to withdraw from access participation.

- The ACTV volunteer system is a major force in motivating producers to work together, as is the nature of the production process itself.

- Producers construct freedom of speech as an individual right rather than a social good.
Producers have constructed a notion of audience that is personal and active rather than faceless and passive. Most producers consider their viewing audiences as they construct access programs, and producers believe that the size of the viewing audience for access programs is underestimated. An interactive community exists among producers and the viewers of their programs.

A few producers directly address the power relationships in society through their programs or through their participation within public access. For others, societal change is approached from within the framework of personal transformation.

Societal change within the access facility involves a dialectical relationship between the individual and the collective; a transformation on the personal level affects the collectivity.

Public access participation encourages a process by which producers move outward from the self to others and to society—including government and other institutions and organizations. Access encourages an expanded view of the world, as well as an active role in shaping that world.

A dialectical relationship exists between individual crew members/ producers and the collective crew/access facility/broader society. Positive experiences with the collectivity result in a bonding, a "community"; negative experiences cause producers to withdraw from the collectivity. The most likely cause of withdrawal from the group is a negative encounter with a difficult personality; ideological differences are offered sanctuary by First Amendment dogma.

Some respondents hold an expanded view of the appropriate level of participation by producers within the structure of access management and policy formation.

Access provides the opportunity to address some economic barriers and generate income through entrepreneurial ventures. Such opportunities are not encouraged by current access structure and policies.
These findings, as well as the results of the deductive analysis from chapter 4, will be discussed further in chapter 6.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS

Overview

This study has focused on the empowerment vision of public access cable television, where video training and participation are said to lead to media literacy, media demystification, and empowerment. This vision is an attempt to address societal inequities in the United States, particularly within the electronic mass media. This study tested the empowerment vision of public access as it related to the experiences of community producers at a public access facility.

Specifically, this study: (1) defined the terms of media literacy, media demystification, and empowerment; (2) investigated the relationships between media literacy, demystification, and empowerment through the various literatures of public access, critical pedagogy, and media education, resulting in the video empowerment chart; (3) tested for evidence of awareness and/or action within the areas directed by the video empowerment chart, with particular focus on evidence of structural change, considered the highest level of empowerment; and (4)
analyzed the data for issues and connections directed by the sensitizing concepts and the producers themselves.

Chapters 1 and 2 investigated and defined the key terms "media literacy," "media demystification," and "empowerment." Media literacy is considered an ability to "read" and "write" media programs by breaking on-screen productions into component elements, evaluating them, and thereby disrupting the "seamless," "natural" sense of television programs. Media demystification is the ability to recognize and evaluate the complex systems and relationships involved in the creation and distribution of media products, and their connection with broader societal issues. Empowerment refers to an awareness of self, others, and society, with action to change power relationships within each of these spheres. Action to change societal relationships is considered the highest level of empowerment.

Chapter 3 described and outlined the various qualitative methodological perspectives directing this study, particularly that of Sense-Making.

Chapters 4 and 5 provided quantitative and qualitative analyses of data, probing the connections between media literacy, demystification, and empowerment.

This chapter presents conclusions of the test for empowerment addressed by this study.
Findings

The major results of the deductive and inductive analysis stated in chapters 4 and 5 will be addressed below. They are:

1. Media literacy is an outcome of the public access experience for all the producers taking part in this study. Media demystification is an outcome for many, but not all.

2. A new awareness of self is an outcome of the public access experience for some of the respondents; most also experience a new awareness of others. This is best considered within the context of access as process, below.

3. Public access participation encourages a process by which producers move outward from the self to others, and to society—including government and other institutions and organizations.

4. This process outward does not include free speech concerns; producers construct freedom of speech as an individual right rather than a social good.

5. Producers are not changing society through direct, Freirean-defined action and reflection.

6. Societal change within the access facility involves a dialectical relationship between the individual and the collective; a transformation on the personal level affects the collectivity.

Other findings discussed in chapters 4 and 5 are presented below. These will be addressed only insofar as they relate to the previous findings:

7. Producers construct a view of themselves and others partly within the framework of a sense of "community." The communities include the production group, the access facility, and the viewers of access programs. A stronger sense of community is experienced within groups sharing a common purpose.

8. Producers construct a view of themselves and others partly within a framework of tolerance. Respondents develop tactics to overcome deep ideological and
personal divisions within the access facility.

Personal divisions are more likely than ideological divisions to cause producers to withdraw from access participation.

9. A dialectical relationship exists between individual crew members/producers and the collective crew/access facility/broader society. Positive experiences with the collectivity result in a bonding, a "community"; negative experiences cause producers to withdraw from the collectivity. The most likely cause of withdrawal from the group is a negative encounter with a difficult personality; ideological differences are offered sanctuary by First Amendment dogma.

10. The ACTV volunteer system is a major force in motivating producers to work together, as is the nature of the production process itself.

11. Survival plays an important role in motivating producers within the areas of production, personal, and societal participation.

12. Producers have constructed a notion of audience that is personal and active rather than faceless and passive. Most producers consider their viewing audiences as they construct access programs, and producers believe that the viewing audience for access programs is underestimated. An interactive community exists among producers and the viewers of their programs.

13. Some respondents hold an expanded view of the appropriate level of participation by producers within the structure of access management and policy formation.

14. Access provides the opportunity to address some economic barriers and generate income through entrepreneurial ventures. Such opportunities are not encouraged by current access structure and policies.

The ramifications of these findings on relevant areas of scholarship and practice are discussed below.
**Discussion**

**Media Literacy**

The major finding of this study is the discovery that media literacy is an outcome of access participation for all the participants; media demystification is a result for many producers. All respondents are able to recognize and evaluate program content, intent, and the technical elements found within television programs. To a lesser degree, respondents utilize many of these elements regularly in the program production process. Most respondents are able to recognize and evaluate the structure of media organizations and systems, as well as connections with larger social systems.

The findings support the claims of media education that media practice aids the acquisition of the skills of media literacy and demystification. The findings also bolster critical media pedagogy's claims of the dialectic between the "reading" and the "writing" of media literacy skills. Critical pedagogy's "empowering moment," considered below, also suggests the creation of learning situations which may promote conscious reflection upon personal media skills.

The major finding of this study—that media literacy and demystification are an outcome of the public access experience for the producers in this study—supplies empirical data to what heretofore have been theories supported primarily by anecdotal evidence.
The findings support both the inoculation and critical media literacy perspectives: producers do become more savvy media "consumers"; producers' experiences may also be conceptualized within the framework of "political, social, and cultural practices" (Sholle and Denski 1993, 306). Theories within critical media education that posit that the viewing and producing activities of producers are inseparable are also upheld by this study.

Media literacy also has value in promoting analytic as well as critical thinking skills. Within the critical context, media literacy and demystification become tools for challenging the way things are, not merely devices that allow persons to function as good consumers of some commodified version of "information."

The notion that media literacy and demystification are not ends in themselves suggests a process orientation toward empowerment and social change that is strongly supported by the findings in this study. A process approach to communication studies is promoted by Dervin and Clark (1993), who directly inform the discussion in this chapter.

**Access as Process**

The public access vision of empowerment has been criticized as rather naive—that it believes that technology can solve structural-related societal inequities. The evidence accumulated within this study indicates that the
public access vision may not be in practice the naive ideology it appears in theory. Awarenesses and actions of producers either have the potential to address or do directly address structurally based societal inequities. Most producers in this study have experienced at least one moment they define as changing their world to see a world of infinite possibilities. From a dialectically-based perspective of empowerment as process, this defining moment of a world of infinite possibilities is a step in the direction of societal transformation.

The process nature of public access has been contested by Garnham (1987), who states that "the great advantage of the 'process' defense of video from the point of view of its advocates is that it cannot be tested" (67). Indeed, this study indicates quite the contrary—the process-based aspects of the access experience permeate the findings of this project. The process nature of public access has been described by Devine (1992b), who argues:

Communications technology does not automatically solve problems. The use of media for animation purposes is process rather than task oriented. The process of a community forming associations, formulating and articulating concerns, forging public discourse, achieving consensus and restructuring power relationships is probably more significant than the programs themselves, and certainly more significant than the technology used to accomplish these processes. (25; emphasis in original)

Johnson (1994) also defines the process nature of the public access experience:
When we understand that communication is based on social relationships, we see that our work [in access] is not simply 'providing a communication opportunity' in some neutral way. As community media centers and media makers, our work is as much about furthering public discourse and social change as it is about making programs. To ignore that fact will only recreate the same old social patterns in a new glitzy electronic space. Taking a leadership role in media education provides us with 'the real work' to do in our communities, and it can provide us with the conceptual tools and the self awareness needed to do the job. (9)

The findings in this study concur with the perspective of Devine (1992b) and Johnson (1994), that access is best conceptualized as a process rather than within traditional frameworks of "television," "programs," and "audiences."

Access as process conceptualizes constant change within individuals and the collectivities within which they participate. Discussions regarding the nature of access with respect to the First Amendment is but one example of this evolutionary process within the movement itself. For years, access focused on rather simplistic aspects of freedom of speech that emphasized personal expression. Recently, access has moved toward more sophisticated interpretations of the First Amendment, embracing the quality of ideas over their sheer quantity. This institutional movement from the speech rights of individuals to the discourse needs of a society parallels what seems to be the movement outward from the producer to include others and the broader society.
Access as a process addresses the criticisms that video training in the access context focuses on technology as a panacea for social ills. Instead, video training and participation is seen as a means to an ends, rather than the objective itself. The process orientation is important when considering future applications of technology for social purposes, such as those suggested with the National Information Infrastructure.

Given this process-orientation of access, it seems pertinent to begin discussions regarding the level of participation appropriate for volunteer producers. The access ideal of increased public participation within societal structures suggests that producers, community television, and the society as a whole will benefit from an expanded management role in the structure of public access; the findings of this study support this position. With access conceptualized as a process of evolution, volunteer participation within the structure of public access and the formulation of public policy is a logical next step.

The discussion of access as a process is related to the conceptualization of empowerment within a similar framework. This is explored below.

The Nature of Empowerment

The findings of this study add to discussions regarding the nature of empowerment found within critical pedagogy.
The manner in which participants frame empowerment primarily from within the personal sphere is a major contribution of this study to the contest within critical pedagogy. Such a perspective is given cursory attention by Freire, who merely implies the importance of the personal realm in his discussions of societal change.

It is a finding of this study that empowerment builds from the personal and extends outward to include others. As one's life is changed by a transformed sense of self, the lives of others around are touched as well. Society, comprised of groupings of individual "selves" and "others," is subtly changed as a result. This subtle shifting of personal awareness occurs more often within this study than does a conscious effort at changing the power relations within society—usually interpreted as an overt challenge to power.

According to Freirean standards, little societal change is taking place within the public access facility. Freire's overemphasis on action in the societal realm and lack of attention to the role of individual transformation on societal change, seems to misinterpret the nature of societal change. Social transformation seems to involve a dialectical relationship between the individual and collective. A focus on personal transformation as a part of social change is not a pluralist obsession on individualism,
but a dynamic process of interaction between the individual and the collectivity.

These findings also provide direction for contemporary critical pedagogists who place emphasis on empowerment that is primarily within the realm of awareness, with little or no action within either the personal or societal arenas. Awareness does seem to be part of initial steps on the road to personal and societal change, and may be an appropriate orientation for a pedagogy operating within institutional education.

Classroom-bound education can benefit from an understanding of the situations which encourage individual and collective growth from an experiential learning perspective. The findings of this study address the nature of the life-long learning practices of respondents outside the educational institution—within the public access context. The importance of the "empowering moment" is suggested: a moment when the producer becomes fully aware of a new process, new skills, or a new way of perceiving the world. Such a moment parallels Freire's "limit situations" (1970b) which, once overcome, inspire hope and confidence to overcome additional situations (89-90).

This suggests that similar situations involving adult learning might construct the learning experience with an eye to such moments. A greater understanding of the manner in which these situations further the learning process is
possible by using Sense-Making to analyze the data, as discussed later in this chapter.

**Access and First Amendment Practice**

The primary contribution of this study to discussions of the First Amendment is the recognition that respondents adopt particular strategies which allow them to tolerate and/or accept the ideological differences of others. Further investigation in this area, utilizing Sense-Making analytic tools (discussed below), will provide insights into the manner by which individuals construct the day-to-day practice of democratic ideals.

This study also describes the manner in which participants frame their access experience. Respondents overwhelmingly conceptualize access within the First Amendment framework of individual expression rather than public good. This is in keeping with the framing of the access experience within a personal context, and may be related to the respondents' use of freedom of speech dogma to "escape" from undesirable ideological situations. It may also reflect the fact that access has only recently begun to widely emphasize the quality of ideas for the public good rather than quantity of ideas for personal expression.

A deeper understanding of this phenomenon might be provided by utilizing Sense-Making analytic techniques, as discussed below.
Sense-Making

The findings of this study confirm some of the Sense-Making theoretical premises: that individuals operate from a personal framework that includes a dialectic relationship with the collective; that individuals seek help to bridge what they see as gaps in their lives, and construe the information as helpful in this context; and that information is used as a means to an end, not as an end in itself. Sense-Making's perspective of communication practice as a process is also strongly reinforced by findings throughout this study that address the process nature of the respondents' public access experience, and the nature of empowerment.

While this study has utilized Sense-Making theory and data collection methods, it has not employed Sense-Making as a method of data analysis. Such an analysis is based on the idea of the "gap" as described in chapter 3, and focuses on respondent behavior. The method circles a particular moment as defined by the participant and how he or she attempted to bridge the discontinuities of the moment (Dervin 1992). The data is explored with an eye toward these "step-takings"--the "hows" of communication practice (Dervin and Clark 1993).

Future analysis of the data in this study using Sense-Making techniques will provide insights into the process by which the concepts of tolerance are engaged processually,
and the situations best suited to encourage empowering moments of learning. In such an analysis, the data will be analyzed more with an eye to what procedures respondents enact to deal with the differences rather than what they have to say about tolerance.

Utilization of Sense-Making analytic techniques is but one recommendation for further exploration of the access phenomenon; others are suggested below.

**Additional Areas for Future Research**

While recognizing that access is best viewed from within a process orientation that does not consider the viewing audience in the traditional media sense, access will continue to be judged by the programs that make their way into the viewers' homes. As a result, it is imperative that researchers investigate the relationship between the programs and the viewers— from traditional and critical perspectives. The questions of numbers and meaning-making are both relevant to an investigation of access from the viewers' side of the experience.

The findings of this study are applicable only to ACTV and the producers taking part in this project. Related studies with appropriate quantitative methods may provide a useful framework for these results within a broader context.

This study has focused on active producers within the access facility. Further insight might be provided by
conducting similar investigations with other groups within the access facility: "armchair" producers, volunteer crew, and staff. Also, an understanding of the access phenomenon might be augmented by the inclusion of those who never return after the initial orientation session (see chapter 3).

Further research is warranted into the training practices in use at access facilities. An analysis of the data with a focus on training, and utilizing the Sense-Making procedures described above, would contribute to an understanding of the situations and practices that encourage the development of self-empowerment and societal change.

Public Access: A Final Word

This study has explored the empowerment vision of public access cable television, and concluded that the vision does provide some measure by which the social structure of the nation is addressed by participants. Rather than direct, radical action, access encourages a more evolutionary growth of outward movement from individual to collectivity, transforming both in the process. Access, then, does fulfill to a limited degree some of the goals the movement adopted during its inception in the late 1960s and early 1970s: social change through public participation in the electronic media.
However, I must admit to a sense of discomfort at the rather pristine nature of the conclusions of this study. As a scholar, and one operating within the critical/cultural perspective, I am distrustful of conclusions such as these that primarily serve to support an existing system, particularly one in which I have a vested interest.

I do find some solace in viewing this project as yet another process of exploration and growth. Seen from this perspective, having completed a test for empowerment the next step might be to begin to re-evaluate the access goals of social change through media participation within the context of the twenty-first century, or to question the economic and social trade-offs involved in providing the public access to the electronic media.

At this point, there is little doubt that the nature of public access sets it apart from the activities of other societal institutions. The experience is a mixture: part expensive toy, part creative endeavor, part individual challenge, part team effort, part educational experience, and part First Amendment practice. Public access differs from other organizations and institutions primarily in that it operates with the stated goals of providing a voice for the previously disenfranchised within the broader discourse of the society, cultivating a sense that people can change their institutions and society, and acting as an agent of that social change. Access accomplishes these through the
vehicle of a pragmatic, grassroots orientation to video
skills training that has parallels to literacy education.

To a limited degree, public access does fulfill its mandate. Participation in the creation of television programs not only allows persons to become more discriminating viewers, it allows them to actively speak out in the media. Access provides a foundation which encourages individuals and groups to believe they can make a difference on the broader society, and to participate in the workings of the democracy. Indirectly, public access also has the potential to address some of the structural inequities within the society.

The multi-faceted nature of the access experience is best described by one of its participants. Daniel addresses the many aspects of community television as they relate to the lives of the access participants:

Daniel: ... There is a lot of people that come in there and they'll take the classes and they don't understand just what the television media is about. We're not out there doing you know the same as Channel 4 news. We are out there trying to present a thought or an idea most times. We are not professional people. We are you know engineers, housewives and everything else but we're trying to learn how to cope with our society as far as the media that we use all the time which is now television, to better understand it, to use it, to make -- to have fun a lot of times. Produce you know a program that has some context that you know will give someone else the philosophy that you have. Hopefully it is a good show. (B6)
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APPENDIX A

PROTOCOL FOR GROUP INTERVIEW
Public Access TV Producer Group Interview
Moderator’s Protocol

1. WHAT LED YOU TO FIRST GET INVOLVED WITH PUBLIC ACCESS TELEVISION?

--> Probe helps, hindrances: participant, community, society

2. THE EXPERIENCE WITH PUBLIC ACCESS THAT MOST STANDS OUT IN YOUR MIND.

--> Probe helps, hindrances: participant, community, society

3. EXPERIENCES DURING TRAINING THAT STAND OUT IN YOUR MIND.

--> Probe helps, hindrances: participant, community, society

4. THOUGHTS ON THE VISION OF PUBLIC ACCESS
(See attached sheet)

--> Probe helps, hindrances: participant, community, society
4. THOUGHTS ON THE VISION OF PUBLIC ACCESS

In part, the public access philosophy, or vision, says that:

1. Public access is a First Amendment free speech forum

2. People making video programs become more critical media viewers. They better understand the workings of the media in our society. Producers will create new, creative program styles.

3. People making video programs become more aware of themselves, other people, and society. These producers are then better able to work for change in their lives and society.

Other people in public access argue with some of these ideas. They say that:

1. Not many people watch public access. What good is this First Amendment forum if no one is watching?

2. Learning how to make video programs does not mean a producer becomes more critical of the mainstream media, or how it operates in our society. Producers often just want to copy the way programs are made in broadcast tv.

3. Learning how to make video programs does not mean a producer will look with a critical eye at themselves, others, or society. It does not mean producers will attempt to change anything.

(Note: If you're interested, these discussions can be found most easily in the Community Television Review. Copies and subscription information can be found at ACTV. If you're looking for other places these discussions may be found, talk to John Higgins.)
Public Access TV Producer Group Interview    Group #: _____

Date: ______

Your name: ____________ Name you'd like to use: ____________

A LITTLE INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

a. How many years of schooling have you had?

b. In what year were you born?

c. What is your sex?

d. How do you classify your race?

e. When you were growing up, what work did the main income
earner in your family do? (In other words, what kind of
place did he or she work at, and what kind of job did he or
she do?)

f. How would you classify your current work status, job,
career, or current life/s work?

g. Is it ok to use your image and comments as recorded on
videotape today for educational purposes?

_____ YES  _____ NO  _____YES, BUT I have noted
     on the back of this sheet those
     segments I do not want you to use.

Signed:
APPENDIX B

PROTOCOL FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW
Public Access TV Producer Individual Interview

Name: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________

A. OVERALL:
1. PUBLIC ACCESS INVOLVEMENT
2. NUMBER OF SHOWS — AS PRODUCER, AS CREW

B. MOMENTS:
THINK BACK TO A TIME WHEN YOU WERE WORKING ON A PROGRAM WHEN:
1. BEST EXPERIENCE
   ---> probe

2. MOST DIFFICULT/ HARDEST/ WORST
   ---> probe

3. YOU LOOKED AT THE TELEVISION INDUSTRY, OR SOCIETY AS A WHOLE, OR TELEVISION PROGRAMS — "DIFFERENTLY" [MORE CRITICALLY] THAN YOU DID BEFORE YOU STARTED MAKING VIDEO PROGRAMS.
   ---> describe program
   ---> probe

4. YOUR EFFORTS WITH PUBLIC ACCESS MADE SOME KIND OF "DIFFERENCE" IN YOUR LIFE OR THE WORLD.
   ---> describe program
   ---> probe

5. YOUR EFFORTS IN PUBLIC ACCESS WERE WASTED ENERGY.
   ---> describe program
   ---> probe

6. PERSONAL VISION OF PUBLIC ACCESS? WHEN YOU SAW YOUR VISION OF PUBLIC ACCESS WORKING WELL.
   ---> describe program
   ---> probe

[LIST VISION]
7. YOU SAW THE PUBLIC ACCESS VISION WORKING WELL/TOUCHED YOU POSITIVELY.
   ---> describe program
   ---> probe

[REPEAT VISION]
8. YOU SAW THE PUBLIC ACCESS VISION NOT WORKING WELL/TOUCHED YOU NEGATIVELY.
   ---> describe program
   ---> probe
NOW, LOOKING BACK AT YOUR ENTIRE EXPERIENCE WITH PUBLIC ACCESS

9. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY HAVE BEEN THE IMPACTS ON YOUR LIFE?
   -----> describe impacts
   -----> probe

10. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY HAVE BEEN THE IMPACTS ON YOUR COMMUNITY?
    -----> describe impacts
    -----> probe

11. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY HAVE BEEN THE IMPACTS ON COLUMBUS?
    -----> describe impacts
    -----> probe

12. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY HAVE BEEN THE IMPACTS ON SOCIETY AS A WHOLE?
    -----> describe impacts
    -----> probe

C. ENTIRE INTERVIEW
1. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

D. DEMOGRAPHICS
1. HOW MANY YEARS OF EDUCATION DO YOU HAVE?

2. IN WHAT YEAR WERE YOU BORN?

3. HOW DO YOU CLASSIFY YOUR RACE?

4. WHEN YOU WERE GROWING UP, WHAT WORK DID THE MAIN INCOME EARNER IN YOUR FAMILY DO -- WHAT KIND OF PLACE DID HE OR SHE WORK AT AND WHAT KIND OF JOB DID HE OR SHE DO?

5. WHAT IS YOUR SEX?

6. HOW WOULD YOU CLASSIFY YOUR CURRENT WORK STATUS, JOB, CAREER, OR CURRENT LIFE’S WORK?

E. CLOSING COMMENTS
PROBES

Name: __________
Date: __________

P1a. IDEAS/CONCLUSIONS

P2a. FEELINGS/EMOTIONS

P3a. QUESTIONS/CONFUSIONS

P4a. HELPS
   P4b. FOR EACH HELP/FACILITATION: HOW HELPED.
   P4c. [CHAIN]

P5a. HINDRANCES
   P5b. FOR EACH HINDRANCE/HURT: HOW HURT.
   P5c. [CHAIN]

P6a. HELPS/BENEFITS WANTED
   P6b. FOR EACH HELP WANTED: HOW WOULD HAVE HELPED
   P6c. [CHAIN]

P7a. HOW PROBES RELATED TO LIFE
    LOOKING BACK AT ALL OF THESE THINGS YOU MENTIONED
    -- IDEAS/CONCLUSIONS, FEELINGS/EMOTIONS,
    QUESTIONS/CONFUSIONS, HELPS, HINDRANCES, AND
    HELPS WANTED -- THAT RELATE TO THIS MOMENT WHEN
    __________. HOW DID ALL OF THAT CONNECT
    WITH/RELATE TO YOUR LIFE?

P8a. ANY OTHER HAPPENINGS
In part, the public access philosophy, or vision, says that:

1. Public access is a First Amendment free speech forum

2. People making video programs become more critical media viewers. They better understand the workings of the media in our society. Producers will create new, creative program styles.

3. People making video programs become more aware of themselves, other people, and society. These producers are then better able to work for change in their lives and society.
APPENDIX C

CODING RESULTS: INFORMANT "TALK" SCORES
Table 10:
Coding Results: Informant "Talk" Scores

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<th>AREAS OF FOCUS</th>
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4 = quite a few responses 1 = few responses
3 = many responses 0 = no response
2 = moderate amount of responses