

INTRODUCTION

The Use of Video for Behavior Description and Intervention

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Video provides fascinating perspectives for the behavioral sciences within research and application. The more video becomes accessible, the more one is puzzled, however, by a considerable gap that exists between the available technical potential and the reserved application of video in the behavioral field. Despite a first or even a second trial, very often video recordings are made and then put aside without any further application. This book aims to bridge this gap. Moreover, it guides the various professions interested in human behavior to make use of the video “tool” in a creative way to accomplish a variety of tasks in behavioral assessment, documentation, changing cognitions and emotions, and enhancing behavior.

Part I of this book outlines the basis for video application, including the technical equipment as well as the goals to be pursued, the psychological theories, and the procedures and techniques derived from these theories. Part II deals with various applications in behavioral analysis, instruction and teaching, and therapeutic interventions.

Behavioral sciences need more instruments for analyzing and documenting behavior as well as methods for inducing change in the individual. There are three levels on which human behavior and experience may be approached: (a) the subjective level, where cognitions and emotions are accessible via verbal reports; (b) the physiological/ biochemical level, where the biological reactions are taken as signs or indicators for psychological processes; and (c) the behavioral level, where actions of the individual are the relevant clues. It is obvious that the behavioral level deserves as much attention as the others. Given the current state of the art, this approach can be best achieved by observation with the help of video. One of the fascinating aspects of this tool, however, is its potential for inducing change—a primary focus of this book.

TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT

Chapter 1 on equipment fundamentals is a must for those who are beginning to work with video in the behavioral field. There are specific requirements for a scientific use

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of video that differ considerably from many of the fancy functions that consumer or even semiprofessional equipment provides. Reviewing this chapter will help to avoid the frustration that otherwise causes many video users to give up after a few trials.

GATHERING INFORMATION

For many video users, Chapter 2 on documenting and analyzing should also be read before starting a video enterprise. It is not the recording but the video software handling that makes video useful. Some well-known videotape graveyards result from attitudes reflecting the stage in our cultural development of hunters and gatherers. But since it is so easy to collect the prey, too little effort is generally put into cultivating the goods. As becomes quite obvious with video, the problem today is not collecting information but rather selecting and filtering it. The basic principles of these processes are dealt with in this chapter.

THEORY AND GOALS

Although an accepted, comprehensive theory for the psychological effects mediated by video is still lacking—an advantageous state for continuous development at this point—the concepts advanced in this book are of considerable appeal and fascination in their applied perspective. This holds especially true for the concept of feedforward and self-modeling as opposed to feedback and self-confrontation (Chapters 6 and 7).

The two main processes whereby influence on the individual is mediated by video are learning from the observations of others (Chapters 3 through 5) and self-information and personal change (Chapters 6 through 8). Both domains integrate psychological theory and practical goals achieved by using video. Within these domains, self-modeling and the theory of feedforward processes appears, in my opinion, to be the most fascinating and future-directed perspective for the creative use of video in therapy and training.

APPLICATIONS

Part II on selected applications covers a variety of topics, clearly showing that video has become an indispensable tool in the behavioral sciences.

The analysis of nonverbal behavior, especially facial expression (Chapter 10), would be impossible without the technical help of video. Providing information and instruction on an interactive basis has become feasible by video disc (Chapter 9); in medical settings, patients can be prepared better for painful, embarrassing medical procedures; they can be taught to comply with new measures and can be trained in social skills with the assistance of video (Chapter 11).

For those who want to produce videotapes for instruction or training, suggestions for the development of modeling films (Chapter 12) and trigger tapes (Chapter 13) will be especially useful. Both chapters give instructions for video dramaturgy, which must take into account not only the intricacies of the medium but also the psychological aspects of actor/model effects on a receiver, concepts of social interaction and communication, and so on.

Specific techniques are presented and evaluated that directly aim at changing cognitions, emotions, and behavior; these are interpersonal process recall (Chapter 14), video review for athletic skills (Chapter 15), self-modeling in childhood problems (Chapter 16), and developmental disabilities (Chapter 17). Here, one can keep in mind that further critical evaluations of the effects of video are still needed, particularly studies on the mechanisms that are essential for change.

After Milton Berger's (1978) *Videotape Techniques in Psychiatric Training and Treatment*, Peter Dowrick and Simon Biggs edited a comprehensive overview on research and applications in their 1983 book *Using Video: Psychological and Social Applications*. The technology has developed considerably since then, making most of the technical devices more available. (Video was quite expensive for clinical use at that time.) Fortunately, the psychological concepts have grown, too, as becomes apparent throughout this book. The emergence of practical procedures and the advice for applications and their integration into a framework of psychological theory are essential, given the current state of the art. Thus, the potential use of video in analyzing behavior and in training and therapy can be made fully available.