

Book Review – Video in Research in the Learning Sciences

Madhumita Bhattacharya

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October– 2008

Book Review – Video in Research in the Learning Sciences

Editors: Ricki Goldman, Roy Pea, Brigid Barron and Sharon J. Derry (2007). *Video in Research in the Learning Sciences*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. ISBN 0-8058-5360-X.

Reviewer: Madhumita Bhattacharya, Centre for Distance Education, Athabasca University – Canada's Open University

Video Research in Learning Sciences gives a new insight to research methodologies in learning sciences. This book is an important source of collection of chapters covering the art, science, and practices of video for in-depth research of human interaction in learning environments. Videos are used for collection of research data in all fields of research. This is the first book of its kind that has dealt with the topic of video research in such a great depth and versatility. Video Research in Learning Sciences - not only is it an accessible and out of the ordinary textbook for researchers, but it is also an excellent reference resource for people who want to use videos for a specific purpose in a teaching and learning context.

This book is divided into four sections and 35 chapters. Each part has a cornerstone chapter, which sets the scene for the reader by giving an overview of the chapters included in that section. The cornerstone chapters also introduces to the relevant issues and concerns in particular area of video research which gives triggers to the readers to be critical about the author's point of view in the chapters.

The first part on theoretical frameworks discusses a range of theoretical and methodological approaches to conduct and present research in learning sciences using video as a research tool, and in particular how video affects the nature of conducting research when it is used to build learning communities and cultures. This section provides the philosophical basis for the book. This section contains ten chapters including diverse perspectives to video research from ethnography, semiotics, conversational analysis, aesthetics, pleasure, and phenomenology. Each chapter author(s) describes in a meticulous way how video complements and enriches their process of making meaning in and of educational environments, and what particular challenges they have faced in conducting video research. The final chapter in this section introduces to the concept of ways of seeing video. This explanation opens up a wider perspective of purpose of viewing video.

Part 2 commences with a chapter which give details about video as a tool to advance understanding of learning and development in peer, family, and other informal learning contexts. This section presents a new insight into the use of videos for researching informal learning and

discusses the challenges of doing so. The chapters in this section provide directions for selecting and coding videos purposefully.

The third part of the book covers video research in formal educational settings. The cornerstone chapter in this section discusses the issue of standards for videography and raises a number of thoughtful questions and gives suggestive ideas for the researchers. Chapter authors discuss usefulness and difficulties of using video research in formal settings for learning, assessment, training, and professional development.

The final part of the book on “video collaboratories and technological futures” encompasses cutting-edge uses of video technologies for researchers of 21st Century. Authors engaged in advanced theoretical and methodological video researches envisage the future developments of video technology. This section introduces emerging tools and technologies for video data collection, analysis and interpretation. The chapters under this section give a panoramic view of the potential of video technologies for researches in learning sciences.

There are substantial references at the end of each chapter. It would have been a good idea to provide the list of references of each chapter in the electronic form at the publisher’s website or book website, for the readers to be able to search the references through electronic library databases. I visited the online site mentioned in the book. I felt that the potential of online presence have not been utilized well for this book. It could be possible to make it an interactive website where views from readers could be collected for future improvements.

In social and behavioral science research humans form the focus, and there is therefore an ethical dimension to most research activities in the field. Different chapters in this book explain why it is important for us to be conscious of the ethical dimensions of using video studies in any research in this field. It would have been a better idea to provide a chapter under each section discussing the ethical issues concerning the use of digital videos for research especially for part 2, 3 and 4.

If you plan to carry out learning sciences research in your discipline using videos then Video in Research in the Learning Science is an invaluable resource to help you through.

