



Films/Videos/DVDs: Direct and Virtual Experience

Nancy S. Maldonado & Mariann Pezzella Winick

To cite this article: Nancy S. Maldonado & Mariann Pezzella Winick (2002) Films/Videos/DVDs: Direct and Virtual Experience, *Childhood Education*, 78:5, 316-317, DOI: [10.1080/00094056.2002.10522753](https://doi.org/10.1080/00094056.2002.10522753)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00094056.2002.10522753>



Published online: 26 Jul 2012.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 12



View related articles [↗](#)

Direct and Virtual Experience

Television and computers have given life to a world of virtual experiences. This has had an enormous effect on the psychosocial development of children. Splish-splashing in puddles is a very different experience from watching others engage in the same action on television. While both can be learning experiences, the difference in value is at the level of interaction with oneself and with others. Both direct and virtual experiences require that adults become more aware of the effect such experiences have on children. Past experiences offer myriad possibilities for learning. Often a more knowledgeable and capable person intervenes, clarifying and adding to children's understanding. In this way, interaction becomes a medium for enhanced psychosocial development.

Children come to school with a vast reservoir of experiences; even 3-year-olds have had rich experiences with family life, holidays, pets, music, as well as, possibly, encounters with sadder experiences, such as an illness in the family. How we build on these experiences can strengthen their value and add to a child's maturation. We hope that the following reviews will help viewers have meaningful learning experiences when watching these videos.

Real People/Real Experiences

That's a Family! This timely video presents diverse family types through a documentary style, with children being the focus at all times. A child of gay parents has an at-home class birthday party, a bi-racial family attends a Chinese New Year parade; we also meet the guardian

grandmother of three grandchildren. Each of these configurations, it is clear, is a family in its own right. This timely and heartwarming video would help spark valuable classroom discussions of what constitutes a family.

Extensions: An excellent social studies resource for 3rd grade and up. All teacher education programs could benefit from this video, as well, since parent/child/school relationships depend on an understanding of children's homes. The film is also recommended as a platform for discussion for use with parent groups and parents undergoing changes in their own families.

Produced by Women's Educational Media. 2000. 35 minutes. 2180 Brant Street, Suite 203, San Francisco, CA 94110. www.wemfilms@womedia.org

Families of Korea. This cinematic visit to Korea focuses on two families; one that lives on a farm, the other in a city. Viewers watch the families in their everyday lives: getting ready for the day, interacting with each other, eating meals, going to school, enjoying after-school activities, marketing, studying, entertaining, and going to bed. Differences between city and country living can be seen in the children's school and home activities. This video, and others in the series (*Families of the World*), can be very useful in strengthening and deepening social studies learning for middle graders.

Extensions: This video can inspire research related to relationships, foods, sports, school day, homes, and map work, as well as comparisons between lifestyles, city and rural, United States and Korea. The

class could prepare a Korean meal, plan a Korean Day, learn a Korean song, or interview Korean Americans. The content lends itself to group and project work.

Produced by Master Communication, Inc. 2001. 30 minutes. 800-765-5885. www.familiesoftheworld.com

Emily's Story. These next two videos focus on cancer. *Emily's Story* is an excellent video for use with schoolchildren from 9 years old up. This quietly effective film focuses on Emily, a 3rd-grader and cancer patient. She candidly discusses her illness, its treatment, and effects such as hair loss and fatigue. Her interactions with classmates, her at-home teacher, her classroom teacher, and her cancer advocate are skillfully handled and will lead to worthwhile classroom discussions. Emily is a soft-spoken child with a developing sense of self that reflects the challenges she has had to face. Viewers will also learn of Emily's classmates—their fears and questions—and watch as they develop their ability to empathize. The reviewers recommend *Emily's Story* as a very positive and realistic film. This would be an excellent addition to the curriculum since so many people are touched by this disease.

Back to School. A companion video to *Emily's Story*, directed to a teen audience, is *Back to School*. The film's subjects are several cancer patient students returning to school. As they face the fears and misconceptions of their peers, one notes that "having cancer is like living a nightmare." The video directly addresses questions and expectations related to treatment, the nature of the dis-

ease, and the prognosis for these four individuals. The importance of having a supportive network of friends is highlighted as well. As the cancer patients interact with classmates, friends, family, and teachers, viewers will see a range of responses to illness. The teachers in particular have an interesting role to play with the returning students. This is an upbeat film; not one minute is wasted in the production. This video is highly recommended for the targeted audience.

Extensions: The guided material provided with both of these films offers substantive material on cancer that is very helpful in integrating film content with the curriculum.

Both films: 2000. 18 minutes. Bristol-Myers Squibb Oncology-Cancervive. 1875 Century Park, East Los Angeles, CA 90007. www.Cancervive.org

Virtual Experiences

Baby Mozart and Baby Bach. Within the past several years, researchers have studied babies' responses to classical music. These video-CD combinations are engaging, exposing infants to classical music as they view toys and other objects. The images are clear and skillfully presented. In a train sequence, attention is held by the image of a moving train accompanied by the sound of a Mozart concerto for flute and harp. This type of mix works well with infants over 9 months old.

We have long known that music plays a critical role in the life of humans. Listening, singing, dancing, and creating music are all part of our human heritage. For parents and educators fatigued by the raucous sound accompanying far too many children's videos, *Baby Mozart* and *Baby Bach* offer a true audio treat and respite.

Extensions: Listen to the CD selection, which includes a wide range of classical composers, at

rest time, meal time, and especially on car trips. Children can participate by keeping time with pot covers, pots, and wooden spoons, or by dancing. Identification and naming of the objects will be a helpful activity in at-home and toddler programs.

30 minutes. CD 8 tracks/14 minutes. Ages 1 up.

Baby Doolittle: Neighborhood Animals. This delightful video begins with a pink flying wooden cow and rousing classical music. Animals in the home (dog, cat, mouse), in the yard (bird, rabbit, insect), on the farm (cow, horse, pig), and on the river (frog, otter, duck) move through this video with sprightliness and beauty. The soundtrack is enhanced by the works of Rimsky-Korsakov, Scarlatti, Vivaldi, and Pacabel. A companion video, *World Animals*, takes the viewer farther afield with the same ingenuity and artistry.

Extensions: Directed toward a toddler level, we recommend the video be part of an interactive adult/child experience. There are many teachable extensions related to the natural environment, language, recognition, and discrimination between animate and inanimate objects. The CD includes music from both *Neighborhood Animals* and *World Animals* and can be used for listening pleasure at home, on trips, and at school.

30 minutes. CD 15 minutes. 12 months and up.

Baby Doolittle: Van Gogh. In this video, the palette of Vincent Van Gogh splashes across the screen in a riot of color as flamingoes march, poppies pop, and clouds rush across the sky. This visual progression is accompanied by the music of Satie and Bizet. Colors and actions are backed by more classical music (from Rossini, Ravel, Offenbach). While this may sound chaotic, it is not—quite the opposite, in fact. The timing is very good, allowing the viewer time to “see” rather than just experience an image. A playfulness in both image and music holds the viewer's attention. The video lends itself to use in segments, which is particularly helpful with young viewers. This is a very effective way to bring artistic masterpieces to young viewers.

Extensions: One color per week can be featured with a child or a group, using indoor/outdoor reference points, finger-paints, crayons, collage materials, pictures, and songs (e.g., Mary Had a Red Dress, etc.). Adults could also encourage children's identification of colors in home objects, school objects, etc.

30 minutes. CD 8 tracks/14 minutes. Ages 1 up.

All three videos produced by The Baby Einstein Company, 9285 Teddy Lane, Suite 200, Lone Tree, CO 80124. www.babyeinstein.com

To Someone Who Stutters, It's Easier Done Than Said.

The fear of speaking keeps many people from being heard. If you stutter or know someone who does, write or call for our free informative brochures on prevention and treatment of stuttering.



1-800-992-9392

www.stutteringhelp.org

3100 Walnut Grove Road, Suite 603 • P.O. Box 11749 • Memphis, TN 38111-0749