For Expression of Ideas

Cameras Viewed as Pencils of the Future

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The director of the University of Buffalo's Center for Media Study predicts that cameras soon will be used as readily as pencils in expressing thoughts and ideas.

"Why Johnny Can't Read" was an important problem in the 1960s "Why Johnny Can't Write" is being discussed today, and a major topic of the 1960s may be "Why Johnny Can't See."

The bombardment of thousands of moving images into our daily lives already is being taken seriously in many quarters, and its impact is beginning to be felt by the public.

THE STUDY OF MEDIA and its implications is the concern of UB's Center for Media Study. Dr. Gerald O'Grady, center director since 1972, says that since we know how to read and write from the age of five, we can understand and interpret the written word. But we have not made images or used film and video cameras to express our thoughts and ideas, and so we do not have that comfortable familiarity with images needed to fully understand them.

"But, a time will soon be here," Dr. O'Grady says. "when cameras will be used as readily as pencils."

Students are studying all aspects of media at the center in the Ellicott Complex on the Amherst campus. The centers concept of "media," is very broad.

"IT INCLUDES film and television as we know it," he says, "but, more importantly, all of the codes of human expression, all of the symbolic codes of culture, concentrating specifically on the moving image accompanied by sound."

Course work encompasses the making of film, video tapes and other media; the history, theory and analysis of media forms, and the psychic and social effects of media.

While other schools throughout the country offer courses in film or television, the Ellicott Complex on the Buffalo's Center for Media Study predicts that cameras soon will be used as readily as pencils in expressing thoughts and ideas.

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