

Agent Board

The agent board is accountable for any operations of the consortium that the board of directors deems necessary, for example:

1. installing and maintaining head end equipment,
2. providing the necessary physical facilities,
3. looking after finances,
4. providing and supervising the necessary staff.

Program Coordinator

The board of the consortium usually designates an educator to act as program coordinator. This person may work alone or, as some consortia have done, may organize program committees to be responsible for evaluating and answering program needs.

Animateur

Another possible employee of a cable consortium is an animateur, operator, or liaison officer to organize, supervise and coordinate the activities of the consortium. This person is able to have a broad perspective over the whole operation and be the contact person with outside agencies and the public.

Programming

Once the AECA grants the educational cable channel to a cable consortium, the consortium sends program logs each month to the AECA as a way of informing the AECA of program content and general operation of the channel. Following guidelines developed by the CRTC, AECA recommends procedures for completing the logs.

Each year using these program logs, the AECA prepares a study which includes a description of each operating consortium in terms of membership, staff, intended audience, and details of programming describing

"This individualization of consortia and the emphasis on local needs guarantees that educational television is specifically designed to fulfill unique educational needs within a given geographic area."

daily broadcast times, average weekly broadcasting hours, the number of programs broadcast and the percentages of local, ACCESS and other programming and of Canadian content.

Alberta Consortia

At present, cable coverage in Alberta is approximately 70 percent with a prediction for 1985 that cable will be available in 85 percent of the province. Currently within the province, there are six operating educational cable consortia: Calgary, Edmonton, Edson, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie and St. Paul; and at least three more in the formative stages in Drumheller, Lacombe, and Vegreville. See Table 1 for a synopsis of membership, staff, head end and studio facilities, and average programming hours per week during March, 1981.

Programming

Aside from being an alternative to commercial television, each consortium tries to:

1. distribute educational and instructional programs to a large number of people within the community that is linked by cable;
2. relate all programming to local needs and interest;
3. provide educational institutions and organizations with a means of communicating with the general public (for example, board meetings, an address by the superintendent, information about courses offered by institutions);
4. provide direct and convenient access to instructional and informational program material; and
5. provide assistance for efficient and effective learning through the visual medium of television.

This individualization of consortia and the emphasis on local needs guarantees that educational television is specifically designed to fulfill unique educational needs within a given geographic area. While having the capability of reaching a wide audience, educational cable consortia can and should

"At present, cable coverage in Alberta is approximately 70 percent with a prediction for 1985 that cable will be available in 85 percent of the province."

afford the luxury of appealing to a narrow audience for a variety of programs. Programs assigned to meet specific and unique local needs are insurance towards interesting, satisfying and maintaining a local audience.

Programs range from politics to car maintenance, and sources vary from commercial enterprises like Esso Resources to local school boards. Local productions are encouraged because of their ability to react immediately to local and regional interests and needs. Programming from ACCESS (the provincial production agency) varies from worldwide appeal like "Science International" to more Canadian-specific materials which relate directly to curricula. Community colleges and institutes of technology offer several popular programs. The Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) has a basic photography course that has been shared with other consortia. Grant MacEwan Community College offers a course for library technicians which has been broadcast by northern consortia, where this type of course is not available through the regional colleges. Athabasca University, which is the only university with a provincial mandate and thus is a member of each of the consortia, offers the video part of some of its courses over cable. If cable is not received in the home, students can go to a local college or school to view the programs.

With the participation and resources of local educational institutions, including community schools, educational consortia, and Further Education Councils, it is possible to program a new channel at least 10 hours per week and develop it over a few years into a 30 to 40 hours week. This year's study of the educational cable consortia, based on the four consortia operating in March, 1981, indicates worthwhile efforts in local programming. The cable consortium in Grande Prairie has achieved great success in the form of three busy phone lines during the daily hour-long production, "Our Place After School". A fourth telephone line was added near the end of the 1980-1981 programming year in an attempt to keep up with the demand. The study reports that Edmonton's educational cable consortium continues to increase its local programming, and its school board members take advantage of the communications opportunity to inform their rate payers of school board activities. The report recommends that more opportunities be sought to exploit the potential to deal with "hot" issues of interest to education in the communities served by cable.

References

- Morton, R. Policy paper for the Alberta Educational Communications Authority. Edmonton: ACCESS, 1977.

Community Communication: Parent Education Radio Program

Wanda Young

Davis and Baran (1981) credited Lazarsfeld with the development of administrative research in communication, through the establishment of marketing research and audience analysis. In this study audience analysis was applied in a survey of Canadian radio stations to determine whether a particular need of audiences was being met by the stations.

The main topic of concern was parent education. Bronfenbrenner (1978) stated that the groups most in need of parent education were those who do not yet have children, those who no longer have children, and those who will never have children. In explaining his thesis, Bronfenbrenner indicated that North American civilization required a social policy and social practices that would give status and approval to parenthood. Bronfenbrenner recommended media programming about the family, showing where children are, what they are doing, and who cares for them. The conditions of the children and their caretakers should be exposed. Bronfenbrenner's recommendations were for television, but such programming could be applied to radio as well. Programs could be designed for adolescents, the elderly and single persons, the audiences that Bronfenbrenner recommended.

Teenage audiences represent a group who do not yet have children. Adolescents do have unwanted pregnancies (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1976). Buck (1971) found that 98 percent of teenagers listen to radio, spending two hours per day (Dominick, 1974).

A group who no longer have children are the elderly. Foster (1970) and Robbins (1971) noted that the elderly used radio extensively and were loyal listeners.

The adult listening audience might assist in establishing status for parenthood. Mendelsohn (1971) observed that radio plays an important part in the everyday life of many persons. In Canada, 98.4 percent of all households have one or more radios (Segal, 1980).

The purpose of this study was to survey Canadian radio stations for programming about the family and parent education. The questions of interest were:

Which Canadian radio stations offered

programs in parent education?

Who prepared the programs?

What kinds of program were produced?

How were the programs evaluated?

Background of the Study

In a study of parenting education resources in the province of Saskatchewan (Health Promotion Directorate, 1979), it was recommended that radio programs dealing with parent education be scripted. The advisory board and station manager of CJUS, the University of Saskatchewan FM radio station, asked for suggestions for educational radio programs. A series on parent education was prepared and funding was obtained from the Health Promotion Directorate to start the project in 1980.

For this study, parent education was defined as the preparation of parents and prospective parents for child care and development, and the improvement of family living. Such areas as nutrition, management of resources, environment, and relationships were of particular concern.

The improvement of family living was an objective of many of the parent education programs reported by Crooke and Glover (1977) in a history of the subject. Breivagel and Parker (1980) pointed out that families have been neglected and need help. Developing countries may be more advanced in radio programming to help families (Clearinghouse on Development Communication, 1980). In North America, media programs often conflict with the parental values of no violence, sexual restraint, lifetime monogamy, and planning for the future (Le Masters, 1970). Schramm (1974) defined communication as an orientation to a set of informational signs about content that would reduce uncertainty. The Simon Fraser University Telecommunications Research Group (1978) observed that it was a purpose of programming to promote social change and development, catering to special interests such as those of parents. Whatever media or methods were used to communicate parent education concepts, evaluation was needed as to the effectiveness of the program in meeting the established objectives (Dubanoski and Tanabe, 1980; Crooke and Glover, 1977).

Procedures

The Questionnaire

A questionnaire was designed including questions about the content objectives of parent education programs, the kinds of parent education programs, and the form of evaluation used for the programs.

The questionnaire was tested in two ways. A group of students and faculty members were asked to comment on the clarity of the questions. Then, the questionnaire was tested during interviews with representatives of the five radio stations in Saskatoon.

The Sample

Listings of radio stations in the *Canadian Almanac*, names of community colleges and government departments who arranged for radio programs, constituted the sample. Questionnaires were mailed to 673 subjects.

Data Analysis

Because the questions were open ended and because some subjects included advertising brochures and program plans, content

analysis with notation of the frequency of concepts about parent education was used to analyze the data.

"A questionnaire was designed including questions about the content, objectives, producers of parent education programs, and evaluation used."

Findings

Questionnaires were returned by 190 (28.19 percent) of the sample. This number included 43 (6.38 percent) radio stations, community colleges, and government departments, offering some type of program about parent education. Of these 29 (4.31 percent) were broadcasts by radio stations.

The frequency of parent education offerings in the provinces of Canada is shown in Table 1. Ontario, with ten stations, and British Columbia with eight stations offered parent education most frequently. Alberta and Nova Scotia had three radio stations of-

fering programs. The Northwest Territories had two radio stations dealing with parenting. Quebec, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan had one station each. New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and the Yukon station replying did not offer any parent education related services on radio. There were fourteen responses from government departments and community colleges.

Sixteen stations offering parent education programs reported more than 5,000 listeners each.

"Sixteen stations offering parent education programs reported more than 5,000 listeners."

Kinds of Programs

The greatest use made of radio was to advertise programs about parent education as shown in Table 2. Next in popularity were public affairs programs which included documentary information about families and parenting. Open-line shows and public service programs used parent education to the same extent. News stories about family con-

ditions were next in popularity. Interviews and guest experts were used by a few stations and an equal number had weekly counsellor services on family problems.

Other formats mentioned by individual respondents included: citizen access, conference tapes, editorial comments, Year of the Child Programs, answers to questions sent to a post box, family planning information provided by the health unit, religious broadcasts, food programs, information for parents about the work of the schools in the community, a series on society and the family, national programs carried on the local station, morning programs, home programs, community forum, and a rolling magazine format.

Objectives of the Programs

The objectives of the parent education programs offered were related to increasing information dissemination rather than education. Such statements as the following were typical:

To provide prenatal information for expectant parents.

To cover a wide range of topics aimed at persons in the child-bearing age.

To provide a series to examine early childhood and puberty problems and to discuss methods for handling such problems.

To speak about family related topics and various health issues.

To explain specific diets and food preparation.

To permit an exchange of views about the family in the world we live in.

To help parents gain confidence in determining priorities and making decisions about their families.

To reflect research about child care and the family.

To provide free time to publicize events such as parent education programs (public service announcements).

To reach a larger audience with information about the well being of children, parents and families.

To focus attention on the complexities of everyday interaction and communication.

These objectives related to the Canadian Radio and Television Corporation's (1975) desire that stations meet the needs of the community. Some objectives were addressed specifically to parents. Others were general and supported Bronfenbrenner's (1978) recommendation that programming be designed to improve policy about children and parenting.

Personnel Producing Programs

The persons producing the parent education programs were described as those with university training or job experience in parenting. Former educators were popular, as were family life counselors, public health nurses, and social workers. Some professionals were invited for specific programs. These included doctors, psychologists, clerics,

nutritionists, and home economists. Commitment to parent education and experience in group work were important characteristics for those chosen to broadcast about parent education.

"Commitment to parent education and experience in group work were important characteristics for those chosen to broadcast about parent education."

Evaluation

Twenty respondents indicated some kind of evaluation was used. Some invited feedback responses to each program. Others used an independent rating system. Surveys and assessments were made of listeners at yearly or bi-yearly intervals. Letters about programs were filed. If 25 to 30 were received the program was considered satisfactory. The number of calls on an open line show indicated the popularity of the topic.

Conclusions

There were limitations to this study. Random sampling was not used, but it would be suitable for a follow-up study in which stations that did not respond, those who did have programs, and those who replied but did not have programs are compared to determine any interest in the production of

Table I

Questionnaire: Frequency

Province	Distributed		Returned		Returned	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Radio Stations						
Alberta	48	7.1	9	1.3	3	0.4
British Columbia	86	12.8	20	3.0	8	1.2
Manitoba	25	3.7	9	1.3	1	0.1
New Brunswick	17	2.5	12	1.8	0	0
Newfoundland	29	4.3	5	0.7	0	0
Northwest Territories	8	1.2	2	0.3	2	0.3
Nova Scotia	25	3.7	6	0.9	3	0.4
Ontario	132	19.6	40	5.9	10	1.5
Prince Edward Island	4	0.6	3	0.4	3	0.4
Quebec	101	15.0	32	4.8	1	0.1
Saskatchewan	23	3.4	21	3.1	1	0.1
Yukon	2	0.3	2	0.3	0	0
Community Colleges	121	17.9	-	-	7	1.0
Government Departments	52	7.7	-	-	7	1.0
Total	673	100.0	161	23.9	43	6.4

Table 1

Kinds of Programs

Format	Frequency	Percent	
		Yes	Respondents
		n	n
		43	190
Advertising	22	51.2	11.6
Public affairs	8	18.6	4.2
Openline	6	13.9	3.2
Public service	6	13.9	3.2
News stories	5	11.6	2.6
Interviews	4	9.3	2.1
Weekly counselor series	3	6.9	1.6
Guest experts	3	6.9	1.6

parent education programs created as a result of the 1980 survey.

The responses are sparse, indicating a paucity of parent education programs in Canada. A recommendation for increased programming in parent education could be made for all provinces.

Producers of parent education broadcast material are advised to utilize short "spot" programs. Open-line shows on controversial issues in family living and parent education is another recommended format. Long programs in a series format would be suitable for educational radio stations.

Professional training for parent educators should include training in writing radio scripts and presenting them. The opportunity to answer questions on open-line shows, and to present short, informative, and interesting talks should be provided in the course work of parent educators. If a campus radio station is not available, simulation exercises could be undertaken using tape recorders. Sponsors might be found for sessions on commercial radio stations.

In the future, electronic technology will make it possible to use the home as a learning center by providing contact with centers of education (Toffler, 1980; Williams, 1979). Family members will continue to interact within the family system and advanced radio technology will provide the opportunity to interact with community centers to obtain stimulation and education as well as relaxation. A suitable topic for education would be parent education concerned with values, the improvement of communication within the family unit and society, the health, nutrition and lifestyle of family members. Parent education is a topic that may require the privacy and bonds afforded by radio (McLuhan, 1971).

This study has shown that a few radio stations in Canada are meeting the vital needs for parent education. There is room for additional programming. Parent educators should be trained to work on radio, and to influence sound policies about families.

References

Bronfenbrenner, U. Who needs parent education? *Teachers College Record*, 1978, 79, 767-787.

Breivagel, W.F. & Packer A.B. A new role in education: Parent education specialist. *Action in Teacher Education*, 1980, 11, 39-42.

Buck, J. Sure, you remember radio. In A. Kerschner & L. Kerschner (Eds.) *Radio and television: Readings in mass media*. New York: Odyssey Press of Bobbs Merrill, 1971.

Canadian Radio and Television Corporation. FM radio in Canada: A policy to ensure a varied and comprehensive radio service, 1975.

Clearinghouse on Development Communication. Health education radio dramas: Sri-Lanka, 1980.

Crooke, J.N. & Glover, K.E. A history and evaluation of parent education. *The Family Coordinator*, 1977, 26, 151-158.

Davis, D.K. & Baran, S.K. *Mass communication and everyday life*. Belmont, Cal.; Wadsworth 1981.

Dominick, J. The portable friend: Peer group membership and radio usage. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 1974, 18, 161-179.

Dubanoski, R.A. & Tanabe, G. Parent education: A classroom program on social learning principles. *Family Relations*, 1980, 29, 15-20.

Foster, E.S. *Understanding broadcasting*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1978.

Alan Guttmacher Institute, *11 Million teenagers: What can be done about the epidemic of adolescent pregnancies in the United States*. New York: Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1976.

Health Promotion Directorate. Guidebook on parent education resources in Saskatchewan, 1979.

LeMasters, E.E. *Parents in modern America*. Homewood, Ill.: The Dorsey Press, 1970.

McLuhan, M. Radio: The tribal drum. In A. Kerschner & L. Kerschner (Eds.) *Radio and television: Readings in mass media*. New York: Odyssey Press of Bobbs Merrill, 1971.

Mendelsohn, H. The roles of radio. In A. Kerschner & L. Kerschner (Eds.) *Radio and television: Readings in mass media*. New York: Odyssey Press of Bobbs Merrill, 1971.

Robbins, R.C. The magnificent music box. In W. McDaytor (Ed.) *A media mosaic: Canadian communication through a critical eye*. Toronto: Holt Rinehart, 1971.

Rogers, E.M. & Adhekyara, R. Diffusion of innovations: An up-to-date review and commentary. In D. Nimmo (Ed.) *Communication Yearbook 3*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1979.

Schramm, W. The nature of communication between humans. In W. Schramm & D.E. Roberts (Eds.) *The process and effects of mass communication*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974.

Segal B. The 1979 world administrative radio conference: International negotiations and Canadian telecommunications policy. Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1980.

Simon Fraser University Telecommunications Research Group. A study of emergence of new forms of local programming within the Canadian broadcasting system, 1978.

Toffler, A. *The third wave*. New York: William Morrow, 1980.

Williams, F. Communication in the Year 2000. In D. Nimmo (Ed.) *Communication Yearbook 3*, New Brunswick: Transaction; 1979.

In my Opinion

Illiteracy and the New Technology

Charles Ungerleider

If you are reading this article, you enjoy a right that is denied to approximately 800 million adults: literacy. Although the figure 800 million adult illiterates is staggering, the number is almost certain to increase in spite of the massive efforts nations are making to eradicate illiteracy.

"The people of the South who still suffer from the burden of the old illiteracy are under-represented among those with access to and understanding of the new communications technologies."

The combination of advanced telecommunications technologies and the advent of pay television has created the conditions for reversing the worldwide trend toward universal literacy which began with the invention of moveable type. Prior to the invention of movable type, people's lives were circumscribed by the boundaries of their local communities. Their patterns of interaction were confined to those with whom they could have face-to-face relations, eliminating contact with people removed by time and distance. Those who were literate could control the transmission of information in a way which enabled them to exercise power over those who were not literate.

The invention of movable type and the spread of literacy to large numbers of people diminished the power of the few literate people who previously held a monopoly on reading and writing. Those who learned to read were able to examine the ideas of the church

and government. In reaction, church and government made censorship laws in an attempt to maintain control over what people thought and what they believed. These attempts to control information and ideas only slowed the changes which literacy had brought.

The invention of moveable type in 1454 eventually led to a more equitable distribution of knowledge than had prevailed until that time. Nevertheless, after more than five centuries, there are still 800 million people who are considered illiterate.

The combination of satellite, computer and television technologies has laid the basis for a new form of illiteracy even before the old form has been eradicated. Once confined to the ability to read and write, the definition of literacy has been expanded to include the possession of skills which enable people to take a full and active part in the affairs of their community. As fee-for-service information systems become more widely established, they will enlarge the knowledge gap between those who can afford access to information and those who cannot.

Information transmission, storage and analysis systems are controlled by a relatively small number of people in the developed or Northern countries. The people of the South who still suffer from the burden of the old illiteracy are under-represented among those with access to and understanding of the new communications technologies.

Even in the developed North, the gap between those with the skills for using the new technologies and those without such skills is much wider than the gap between those who are print literate and those who are not. The gap will widen because access to such information systems is becoming more and more a matter of the ability to pay.

It is possible to direct the sophisticated in-

Charles Ungerleider is an Associate Professor in the Department of Social and Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia.