

By Carmen Luke

PART II (Continued from the last issue)

Lee, Barbara, "Prime-Time in the Classroom." *Journal of Communication*, 1980, 30(1), 175-180.

It was found that script reading prior to televiewing enhances reading interest and critical viewing skills in the classroom. Script reading with TV use in the classroom can motivate children to read more outside the classroom, and provides potential opportunities for parental involvement: parent/child viewing, discussions, book acquisition/reading. *The Corn is Green* was used in this study. 262 teachers and 921 students (gr. 7-12) at 97 metro (U.S.) schools were interviewed about results.

Liebert, Diane E., Sprafkin, J.N., Liebert, R.M., and Rubinstein, E.A. "The Effects of TV Commercial Disclaimers on the Product Expectations of Children." *Journal of Communication*, 1977, 27(2).

The authors found that a standard disclaimer (e.g., "partial assembly required") was "totally ineffective" in communicating the message to children in the age range for which it was intended. When the disclaimer was rephrased ("it must be put together before you can play with it"), 100% of sampled children understood the message — as distinct from 65% understanding the original message. The authors suggest that appropriate wording is crucial for children to understand messages directed at them — particularly toy commercials.

Lind, Loren. "Could ETV Be Made To Work?" *The Intermediate Teacher*, 1979.

This article documents the use of ETV in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. It is shown that there is a general decline in teacher use of ETV. Elementary school use shows the most drastic decline, whereas high school uses shows a slowed increase.

Medrich, Elliott A. "Constant TV: A Background to Daily Life." *Journal of Communication*, 1979, 29(3), 171-176.

This study sampled 764 eleven and twelve-year olds in Oakland, California. 60% of the sample were black, 24.2% white, the rest of Hispanic and Asian ethnicity. Results showed that one-third of inner city families are constant TV households. Low income/educational households comprise the majority of constant TV households. Children from these households are less successful at school and are more likely to watch without parental supervision.

Miller, Mark M., and Reeves, Byron. "Dramatic TV Content and Children's Sex Role Stereotypes." *Journal of Broadcasting*, 1976, 20(1), 35-50.

Links between specific TV content and sex-role perception are examined. It was found that heavy TV viewers (K-6) have more sex-typed perceptions than light viewers. When children viewed reversed sex-role types (occupational), it was found that these children were more likely to endorse women in male occupations than the group not exposed. In all categories it was found that men hold dominant power positions; women are portrayed as low status in all categories. Since children value same sex behavior because they are rewarded for it, since they imitate models similar to themselves, and since there is evidence that children do nominate TV characters as figures to emulate, the authors suggest that TV strongly reinforces existing sex-role stereotypes and conventional family structures.

Moody, Kate. *Growing Up on Television: A Report to Parents*. New York, N.Y.: Times Books, 1980.

The physical effects of habitual televiewing on eye movements, on brain waves, and on hand and body movements are discussed. Moody examines TV's impact on child viewers in relation to schooling, to the family, and to the self. Current research is cited and a useful list of references is provided.

Morgan, Michael. "TV Viewing and Reading: Does More Equal Better?" *Journal of Communication*, 1980, 30(1), 159-165.

The author found that students who are heavy TV viewers read more but comprehend less. There is a qualitative difference in the materials read by heavy viewers — much of this material reflects common TV program content. Heavy viewers consistently read fewer newspapers than light viewers. During early adolescence students are either heavy viewers or heavy readers, not both.

Morison, Patricia; McCarthy, Margaret; and Gardner, Howard. "Exploring the Realities of TV with Children." *Journal of Broadcasting*, 1979, 23(4), 453-463.

This study found that the ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy of TV programming was not correlated to the amount or variety of TV watched but, rather, correlated to age.

Murray, John P., and Kippax, Susan. "Children's Social Behavior in Three Towns with Differing Television Experience." *Journal of Communication*, 1978, 28(1).

The impact of TV on social engagement is examined. Three towns, similar in size and social structure, were sampled:

- High TV Town — 5 years TV experience
- Low TV Town — 1 year experience
- No TV Town — no experience.

It was found that the "novelty effect" of a new TV displaces social engagements/activities. Outdoor activities are replaced by indoor activities. Children from Low and High TV Town were observed to eventually re-engage in social activities much like those of No TV Town children. The authors suggest that "TV, although an initial displacer of social engagement, may ultimately foster increased interpersonal contact by serving as a focal point for shared activities."

Neuman, Susan B. "Television: Its Effects on Reading and School Achievement." *The Reading Teacher*, 1980, 33(7), 801-805.

A summary of recent research on TV and reading achievement is presented. Ten studies which employed a variety of variables are examined. None of these studies show significant negative correlations between TV and reading achievement. It is suggested that children and TV enter into an already existing pattern of influences which impact on reading achievement more substantially than TV alone. Further research is suggested into TV content choice and reading choice.

Neuman, Susan B. "Listening Behavior and TV Viewing." *Journal of Educational Research*, 1980, 74(1), 15-18.

This study sampled 200 preschoolers to examine the relationship between listening and televiewing. The objective was to determine "if the amount and content viewed affected the growth and development of listening behavior." The results showed that TV amount was not a significant factor in the improvement of listening skills. TV content, however, yielded a negative association between amount of news and documentaries watched, and listening scores.

Palmer, Edward, and Dorr, Aimee. *Children and the Faces of Television: Teaching, Violence, Selling*. New York, N.Y.: Academic Press, 1980.

This book takes an unprecedented interdisciplinary approach to three central issues as noted in the title: teaching, violence, and selling. Part I introduces the section on instructional TV with an historical perspective on ETV, and subsequent papers deal with the uses and evaluative problems of ETV. Part II is concerned with questions of TV violence in relation to the child viewer, and concludes with a discussion of the implications for government and industry policy. Part III deals with TV advertising and the social effects on children. The collection of contributions are well organized and present a broad and informative perspective by combining research from a variety of disciplines.

Olson, David. "The Consequences of Television." *Interchange*, 1981, 12(1), 53-60.

The logical relations between TV's symbol system and its referents, and the social relations between the message producer and the consumer are discussed. It is suggested that the propositional equivalence between referent and TV's symbolic representation differs from the print/referent equivalence. The author agrees with McLuhan that specific media "bias" knowledge. Our cultural predispositions towards print may be altered by TV's iconic codes which transform both the structure of knowledge and our processing skills into forms more closely tied to visual imagery and oral language. The TV message producer and consumer exist in an inequitable relation; a minority elite selects and controls information consumed by a vast public. The immediacy of spoken word with visual image which, unlike print, cannot be "re-read," invents TV with unprecedented power by rendering it "above criticism." Like the "ephemeral nature of speech," TV's form inhibits critical comment.

Peters, F.J.J. "Printed Messages in American Commercial TV and the Reading Teacher." *Journal of Reading*, 1979, 22(5), 409-415.

This study found that TV commercials assist in the development of reading skills. Commercials are the primary source of print on screen. Reports show that children who read before entering Kindergarten, do so, in part, because of exposure to print on TV.

Rice, Mabel, and Wartella, Ellen. "Television as a Medium of Communication: Implications for How to Regard the Child Viewer." *Journal of Broadcasting*, 1981, 25(4).

The authors argue against traditional research on TV and children which has tended to place the viewer in a passive, inactive role. It is suggested that the child viewer actively processes TV codes and messages. Three representational codes are proposed: a) iconic, b) media-specific, and c) generic, which co-constitute the message. This interactive model suggests that children's active participation with the medium influences subsequent interpretation and understanding of TV's messages.

Robertson, Thomas S. "Parental Mediation of Television Advertising Effects." *Journal of Communication*, 1977, 29(1).

The author shows that children purchase requests vary with age and, to some extent, social class. Children are more likely to request products frequently consumed by them which, coincidentally, are the same products advertised on Saturday a.m. programs (toys, cereals). Children's requests for products generate parental socialization and

consumer training. Conflict and disappointment is a frequent affective consequence when products are not purchased. The author suggests that research in this area is lacking and that an "enriched mediation model" of TV effect is needed to account for the complex set of familial, situational and socioeconomic factors which influence purchase requests.

Robertson, Thomas S., and Rossiter, John R. "Children's Responsiveness to Commercials." *Journal of Communication*, 1977, 27(2).

The authors suggest that heavy TV viewers are generally more persuadable than light viewers. Age, peer pressure, amount of TV exposure, and parental attitudes influence a child's persuadability. Age is the most important dispositional factor.

Rubin, Allan. "Television in Children's Political Socialization." *Journal of Broadcasting*, 1976, 20(1), 51-59.

This study sampled 1976 seventh graders in urban high schools. Three variables were assessed:

- children's principal source of information,
- amount of TV exposure,
- type of TV exposure.

It was found that heavy TV viewers exhibit low levels of political information. Children who view more public affairs programs exhibit higher levels of political information and awareness.

Rubin, Allan. "TV Usage, Attitudes and Viewing Behaviors of Children and Adolescents." *Journal of Broadcasting*, 1977, 21(3), 355-369.

This study found that age is a consistent indicator of viewing habits: preference, attitude and motivation. It is suggested that, in early childhood, TV satisfies social needs which alter with age and lead to decreased viewing during adolescence. Young children watch twice the amount as adolescents. TV provides pseudo-friendship for the young viewer which generates parasocial interaction. Non-purposive viewing was found to be habituated across all age groups. Older children's altered social demands decreased viewing time and decreased the influence of TV as a reality factor.

Rubin, Allan. "Child and Adolescent TV Use and Political Socialization." *Journalism Quarterly*, 1978, 125-129.

This article presented similar information as noted in Rubin's earlier *Journal of Broadcasting* (1976) article. Adolescents who watched increased amounts of public affairs programs expressed less political cynicism. It was also found that younger children do not exhibit the same political attitudes as were identified in studies of the mid/late 1960's. Young children were less loyal, trusting and emotionally attached to the nation (U.S.).

Saldich, Anne Rawley. *Electronic Democracy*. New York, N.Y.: Praeger Publishers, 1979.

Saldich examines the impact of TV on the American political process. The "tyranny" of TV is examined in light of its universal and pervasive impact on all aspects of socialization: values and belief systems, attitudes and behaviors, and ideology. The covert control of government in (de) politicizing a mass audience through the medium are discussed. The authority, credibility and "intimacy" of TV information are seen as key factors in the nationwide acquiescence to the historically unprecedented institutional power of TV.

Salomon, Gavriel. *Interaction of Media, Cognition, and Learning*. San Francisco, Cal.: Jossey Bass, 1979.

Salomon discusses how the non-content dimensions of media affect cognition. He suggests that a medium's form, the symbolic codes used to present content, makes use of existing cognitive skills, or develops particular skills with which to process visual (TV) information. Salomon's central thesis is that learning from a specific medium is determined by the triadic interaction of:

- a) the nature of the symbol system,
- b) the experience the processor has with that system, and
- c) the situation (or task) within which the symbol system is encountered.

The implications for education are that cognitive performances are differentially affected by different media. As such, learning and the development of particular cognitive skills are directly linked to amount and type of exposure to different media, as well as the task towards which televiewing is directed.

Salomon, Gavriel. "Media and Symbol Systems as Related to Cognition and Learning." *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 1979, 71(2), 131-148.

The general nature of symbol systems is described. Theoretical considerations relate systems to cognition and learning. Empirical research shows that symbol systems vary in content, kind of knowledge presented, and mental skills required. Studies are described which show that media facilitates certain mental skills which interact with individual differences and processing levels. Two cognitive processes are explained:

- a) overt supplantation — TV models cognitive transformation skills which children imitate and internalize.
- b) activation of (mental) skills — visual/auditory codes and cues signal or activate a requisite skill.

Salomon proposes a triadic interaction model of cognition, learning and TV:

- a) individual cognitive makeup,
- b) TV content — message and symbol system,
- c) learner's task or goal perception.

Salomon suggests that different symbolic codes require "shallow" or "deep processing" skills. TV tends to require shallow processing as distinct from the cognitive skills required for reading text.

Salomon, Gavriel, and Cohen, Akiba A. "Television Formats, Mastery of Mental Skills, and the Acquisition of Knowledge." *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 1977, 69(5), 612-619.

This study demonstrated that when TV formats varied, with content held constant, learners' use of mental skills and the acquisition of knowledge was differentially affected. It was also found that different formats (codes) can either activate a skill or supplant it. Skill supplanting gives learners with a lower skill mastery "a more even start." Learners' task perception was also found to influence the use/activation of mental skills.

Salomon, Gavriel, and Cohen, Akiba A. "On the Meaning and Validity of Television Viewing." *Human Communications Research*, 1978, 4(3), 265-270.

This article examines the "construct validity" of TV viewing. It is suggested that TV viewing has numerous meanings and human behavioral/interactive implications. Four conceptualizations of TV viewing are presented, each of which imply a different construct (hence, measure) of viewing:

- a) socio-situational factor — implying choice between activities,
- b) transmission of content — implying decision-making processes in regard to which messages to

select and respond to,

- c) source of content-messages — dealing with recall, comprehension, attitude change,
- d) TV as "language" — processes of encoding messages for extracting knowledge.

Salomon and Cohen emphasize that amount of TV viewing is only one general measure which cannot be equally valid for all measurement purposes and valid within all frames of references.

Schiller, Herbert. *Communication and Cultural Domination*. White Plains, New York: International Arts and Sciences Press, Inc., 1976.

Schiller offers a critical analysis of the cultural imperialism of First World telecommunication systems. He describes the process of cultural domination, its constitutive elements and discusses its mechanism of extension in terms of the cultural contacts between people and societies. First World (primarily U.S.) media dominate developed and developing countries.

Schuetz, Stephen, and Sprafkin, Joyce N. "Portrayal of Prosocial and Aggressive Behaviors in Children's TV Commercials." *Journal of Broadcasting*, 1979, 23(1), 33-40.

This study examined the prosocial and aggressive content of child-oriented commercials on Saturday a.m. programming. All the aggression was found to be performed by male characters. Breakfast cereal commercials contained more aggressive acts than any other category; adult product commercials and public service announcements contained the least amount of aggression. Commercials contain three times the amount of aggressive acts than regular programming. Aggression dominates the "symbolic world of TV", and since children were found to portray more aggression than adults, the authors suggest that such conditions "are optimal for child viewers to be affected by the presentations" — particularly, because children attend more closely to TV child characters.

Sheikh, Anees, A., and Moleski, M. "Children's Perception of Value of an Advertised Product." *Journal of Broadcasting*, 1977, 21(3), 347-354.

The authors investigated the persuasive nature of commercials. Sex difference in children's perception of product value was examined. 68 white, middle class, urban children were studied in two groups, each consisting of 18 boys and 16 girls. The product used was a vibrating action game meant for boys and for girls. One group examined the product, the other group viewed a commercial of the product. Results showed that girls were less misled than boys. The commercialized product was assigned monetary value than the personal product. Girls' value judgements were more "realistic" than boys' judgements. The authors suggest that perhaps 5th grade girls have not yet learned their "appropriate" sex-typed role of persuasability.

Singer, Benjamin, D. (Ed.). *Communications in Canadian Society*. Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1975 (2nd ed.).

24 articles deal with the sociology of communications institutions, the issues of ownership and control of the mass media, the issue of the Canadian identity in relation to mass communication, and the role of the mass media in community and social problems. Also addressed are issues and problems relating to media in the classroom, propaganda, and public opinion in Canadian society. The Resource Guide provides primarily Canadian references.

Singer, Jerome L., and Singer, Dorothy G. "Can TV Stimulate Imaginative Play?" *Journal of Communication*, 1976, 26(3), 70-74.

The authors found that the presence of an adult to "bridge the gap between TV performance and limited attention span can increase the benefit of a program." It is suggested

that the 3-4 year age group is most susceptible to adult influence which can provide immediate feedback to their responses and engage children in dialogue. The authors suggest that TV may only have a limited impact on this age group when adult mediation is available.

Singer, Jerome L., Singer, Dorothy D., and Zuckerman, Diana M. *Teaching Television: How to Use TV to Your Child's Advantage*. New York: Dial Press, 1980.

This book was intended for parents who want "to put the child in control of the TV set rather than vice versa." The book contains many structured lessons and discussion ideas for parent use with which to critically analyze TV content, structure and function. The aim of this book is to integrate TV in a critical manner, rather than find alternatives to viewing. Much of the authors' previous research is presented, providing the kind of evidence needed to understand the impact of TV on children and the importance of teaching critical viewing skills.

Singer, Dorothy G., Zuckerman, Diana M., and Singer, Jerome L. "Helping Elementary School Children Learn About TV." *Journal of Communication*, 1980, 30(3), 84-93.

This study found a positive correlation between the implementation of a critical media curriculum and the ability to better understand and critically analyze TV programs and commercials. In all categories it was found that the critical media curriculum was effective in teaching children about TV techniques and production. It was also found to improve children's writing skills, mathematics skills, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills. Parental viewing habits and attitudes towards TV remained a strong influence on children's attitudes towards TV.

Sprafkin, Joyce, and Rubinstein, Eli A. "Children's TV Viewing Behavior: A Field Correlational Study." *Journal of Broadcasting*, 1979, 23(3), 265-275.

"Prosocial content on current TV series" and children's behaviors are examined. The authors suggest that prosocial behavior is desirable and rewarded at home, and hence, TV reinforces something children "already know." Aggressive behavior is not "normal fare" at home and is discouraged and/or punished — seeing aggressive behavior on TV may disinhibit or discourage such behavior. Prosocial behaviors are always subtle, implicit and verbally mediated, whereas aggressive behaviors are always overt, physical and immediate. Since children learn from simple and direct action, they may be more likely to imitate simple (aggressive) acts. Also, aggressive behaviors are usually performed by the most powerful and successful characters and children will more readily imitate such models.

Stauffer, John, Frost, Richard, and Rybolt, William. "Literacy, Illiteracy, and Learning from TV News." *Communications Research*, 1978, 5(2), 221-231.

The authors investigated the abilities of literate and non-literate adults to recall and use information from a national network TV news program. It was found that literates recalled and applied information better (55%-63%) than non-literates. The authors suggest that the structure of TV news (complex sentence structure, multisyllabic words, etc.) presents considerable problems for functional illiterates. In this sense, the "common sense" compensation developed by functional illiterates does not transfer to the decoding of certain TV information. The reason offered is that reading and writing skills can be assumed to develop the kind of skills requisite to decode visual and oral information as presented on TV. Important to note is that non-literates in a technological society do not share the powers of memory of non-literates in tribal society.

Sullivan, A.M., Andres, E.A., Hollinghurst, F., Maddigan, R., and Noseworthy, C.M. "The Relative Effectiveness of Instructional TV." *Interchange*, 1977, 7(1), 46-51.

This study examined whether instructional TV could produce as high a level of student achievement as live lectures and under what circumstances instructional TV would be most effective. First year university students were sampled. It was found that university level instruction via live lectures produced the highest achievement, whereas studio produced videotape was considered the most inferior instrumental method.

Tierney, Joan D. "The Evolution of Televised Reading Instruction." *Journal of Communication*, 1980, 30(1), 181-185.

It is suggested that a combination of televised and teacher directed reading and writing instruction produced significant superior results in listing, comprehension, reading and writing tests. The best results were found with teachers already positively predisposed towards TV. The author stresses the importance of the use of systems theory in instructional design. That is, predefined learning objectives are abandoned in favor of student and teacher feedback from which learning goals are generated. "Cultural, literature, intellectual and social differences" must be accommodated in instruction. For example, closed-circuit TV can be used to provide immediate feedback on teacher/student interaction during instruction. The author emphasizes the need for a contextual curriculum with TV instruction.

Trurow, Joseph. "Non-fiction on Commercial Children's TV: Trends and Policy Implications." *Journal of Broadcasting*, 1980, 24(4), 437-447.

This is an historical study of the nature and number of children's non-fiction TV programming in the U.S. over a 32 year period. The most notable shift in children's programming occurred during the 1960's when non-fiction programming became "isolated structurally, spatially and thematically." The advent of animation and the slotting of Saturday a.m. programming contributed to this change. After 1968/69 non-animated programs were clearly differentiated as non-fiction is excluded from the Saturday a.m. schedule and inaccessible to most child viewers. The author contends that the FCC supports an assumed belief in the efficiency of industry self-regulation and is neglecting to address the problem of appropriate scheduling. The author calls for appropriate "measures of quality", identification of target population and correlative scheduling, as an imperative need for FCC regulatory policy.

Wackman, Daniel B., Wartella, Ellen, and Ward, Scott. "Learning to be Consumers: The Role of the Family." *Journal of Communication*, 1977, 27(2), 138-151.

This article explains how cognitive development theory and socialization theory can be combined to "form a cognitive developmental approach to socialization research." Two important factors of consumer information processing behaviors of children are:

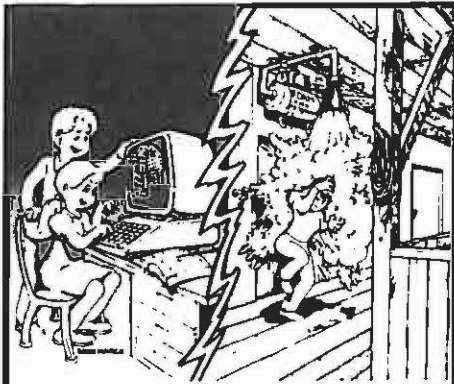
- a) mother's use of information in purchasing decisions,
- b) informational aspects of mother/child interaction about and during purchasing.

It was found that there is a consistent relation between a child's age and consumer processing skills.

Wartella, Ellen. *Children Communicating*. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1979.

This collection of essays describes children's communicative behaviors from a developmental perspective. The

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ware. Some of this software will, apparently, provide practice in particular learning concepts in math and language, but the overall goal is to encourage the broad use of the child's intelligence.

Arizona State University Granted 30 Apple Microcomputers

This fall, Arizona State University began a three-year research project to assess the effectiveness of teaching remedial mathematics to college students. The \$150,000 grant of 30 Apple III microcomputer system and software was made by the Apple Education Foundation as a part of its efforts to enlarge the impact of its educational funding. The computers

are to be used to administer mathematics achievement tests to all students entering the elementary education major at ASU. For the purpose of the study, students who score less than 70 percent are then to be divided into three remedial math study groups: one that is completely computer-guided, a second which uses a combination of computer instruction and individual study, and a third which participates only in individual study. The researchers will also be investigating such questions as how computer interaction can improve students' learning activities, the roles of sound and color in computer-aided instruction, and which types of programs encourage creativity. □

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anyone who is interested in the production or utilization of film.

During the conference, there will be an opportunity to tour the N.F.B. studios and to see how professional films are produced as well as to participate in discussions about the National Film Board, its changing structure and roles, its films and filmmakers, its methods of film distribution and evaluation, and its innovative uses of films and videotapes.

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Coming Issues

Readers will be interested to note that next issue will mark a departure for CJEC. Volume 12, Number 3 will be introducing the concepts of a theme issue and a guest editor. The first theme issue will be **Information Technology** with guest editor Professor Paul Hurly of the Continuing Education Division at the University of Manitoba. Volume 12, Number 4 will focus on **Canadian Studies, Media, and Technology** edited by Professor Kenneth Osborne of the University of Manitoba. Volume 13 Number 1 will be a general issue. Potential authors for CJEC should be aware of these theme issues and submit contributions accordingly. □

Confluence '83 — AMTEC in Montreal June 20 - 22

By J. Duchesne

There could be no better theme for the 1983 AMTEC conference than *Confluence*. *Confluence* of course when audiovisuals and computers are meeting and flowing together to provide more sophisticated and modern means to education.

Confluence because Montreal is at the junction of Ottawa and St-Lawrence rivers, and the pre-eminent place in Canada for bringing together diverse cultures.

Confluence also since people from all over the country will meet at McGill University to communicate. Among those persons will be three keynote speakers:

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cognitive aspects of communication of children (approx. 4-10 year olds) are examined in relation to:

- children's interaction with TV,
- the role that TV plays in the cognitive development of children, and
- the cognitive abilities children bring to bear on decoding TV information.

Webster, James G., and Coscarelli, William C. "The Relative Appeal to Children of Adult vs. Children's TV Programming." *Journal of Broadcasting*, 1979, 23(4), 437-451.

This article examines children's TV preferences and the implications of these preferences for regulatory guidelines. It was found that, given a choice, children prefer adult programs. The current policy debate on the integration of children's programs into prime-time centers on two central issues:

- whether children prefer adult/family prime-time programs because children's programs are not available, and
- if substituted for adult programs, whether children will prefer the substituted over the replaced program.

All results showed that children prefer adult programs, even when children's programs are available. Are regulatory guidelines for scheduling justified given these findings?

Williams, Tannis M. "How and What do Children Learn from TV?" *Human Communication Research*, 1981, 7(2), 180-192.

"This paper provides a review and critical synthesis of research and theory dealing with the processes involved in children's learning from TV. It asks how and what children learn from TV, and at what ages TV is a more or less powerful teacher. The focus is on assessing evidence that TV can play a positive teaching role. It is suggested that a threshold model may be more appropriate than a linear model for evaluating TV's impact on viewers. It is concluded that TV can play a positive role in children's learning, but given typical North American media diets and current TV content, the opposite has been true for most children." The author reviews pertinent and recent research on TV and children. An extensive list of references is provided.

White, Peter S. "Sesame Street: The Packaging of a Curriculum." *Journal of Educational Thought*, 1980, 14(3), 209-219.

This article analyzes *Sesame Street* planning documents. "The assumption about TV, curriculum and pedagogy are discussed in relation to the program which has developed." *Sesame Street* (SS) was initially developed to benefit a target audience of preschool, urban, disadvantaged children. Letter and number recognition was taught using commercial production techniques. The repetitive, rote aspect of this technique proved effective in ensuring a maximum attention level of children. This format presupposed that viewing is a solitary activity precluding such non-attentive behavior such as talking, touching, moving about, etc. In this sense, the author suggests that SS can be conceived of as a techno-behaviorist technique which does not adequately address the needs of those who do watch this program consistently — most of whom are not urban, preschool and disadvantaged. The author cautions of transferring educational content to a new medium. Often technological constraints and/or social expectations influence the content and form of the medium to the point where the process and (educational) outcome may be totally misdirected or, at least, ineffective.

Zuckerman, Diana M., Singer, Dorothy D., and Singer, Jerome L. "TV Viewing, Children's Reading, and Related Classroom Behaviors." *Journal of Communication*, 1980, 30(1), 166-174.

In this study of elementary school children, it was found that the type of TV programs watched predicted children's reading habits, imagination, and enthusiasm in school. The authors state that the rapid pacing of TV programs does not provide enough time to adequately assimilate the information or process the message; imagination is thus seen to be inhibited. Reading habits were positively correlated to types of programs watched. Reading ability did not positively correlate. The reason for this is assumed to be the relatively moderate viewing time (2 hrs.) of the samples tested. Overall televiewing time did not have a negative impact on any of the behaviors tested and, incidentally, related positively to enthusiasm at school. Attentiveness in class was found unrelated to any particular kind of TV content. The "overwhelming majority of children (and parents) tested indicated that they did not watch any public TV programs." □

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