



Educational Media in the U.K.

By Merrill Fearon

"The bear went over the mountain, The Bear went over the mountain..." I began singing to myself as I reflected on those first meetings with British educational media colleagues whose daily concerns were the very ones I'd left behind in Canada. My quick forays into learned publications, in preparation for my U.K. study visit, had given me visions: fresh fields of inter-active video, formative evaluation, and other educational-media esoterica to plunder at my leisure. In the U.K., however, as in Canada, education budgets were shrinking while teachers' needs for appropriate media resources were expanding along with students' needs for knowledge and skills. The chief concern was finding effective ways of providing more services for less money.

I ended up pursuing the practical problems of evaluating, acquiring, producing, and distributing media resources and came to realize the great value of my study visit in providing a sort of laboratory situation, in which I could see my own field of work from a distance, the view unencumbered by everyday responsibilities and local details. Of course I did run across a number of people who enjoyed discussing the fancy stuff — but the gulf between the Big Ideas and the real-live classroom is just as wide on that side of the Atlantic as on this, and the ordinary concerns seemed more important than the exotic ones.

And so began a grand gallop along the trails of "the other side of the mountain": talking to BBC and ITV education officers (field workers rather like program co-

Merrill Fearon is a program co-ordinator at the British Columbia Provincial Educational Media Centre. Her receiving a three-month Travelling Bursary last year from the Commonwealth Relations Trust (CRT) to study educational broadcasting in the U.K. to the CRT's asking AMTEC to sponsor an annual award, beginning in April 1985.

ordinators) and producers, and to media specialists, librarians, and teachers in various local education authorities in England and Scotland; viewing television programs; collecting kilos for print materials; observing at production meetings accompanying education officers on their rounds to schools. My position as a CRT bursar was most helpful in obtaining appointments with British colleagues, particularly since a tradition of reciprocity has been maintained through CRT bursaries for Britons to travel abroad. Even the busiest people were willing to give a half-hour, and one brief interview would often provide me with keys to a whole new set of networks. It was an action-filled summer!

Educational television in the U.K. seems to benefit a great deal from the rivalry between the two major networks — the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) and the ITV (Independent Television) companies. The IBA (Independent Broadcasting Authority) approves the plans of the Independent Television companies for educational broadcasts, the most widely used of which are produced by Granada, Thames, Central, and Yorkshire. I was surprised to learn that the BBC and ITV companies produce approximately equal amounts of educational programming and accompanying program guides; and that both have been producing educational television for about 25 years. In recent years, large amounts of money have been channeled into continuing-education television by both the BBC and ITV; many of us are familiar with series from both networks which have found their way into Canadian colleges and institutions.

Economies of scale have thus produced a steady flow of highly-quality educational broadcasts from the two large networks for 25 years. However there is no parallel provision of television acquisition services, so teachers' being able to make use of programs produced outside of U.K. depends on acquisition through diminishing local-authority budgets. And although the advantages of videotape use have

been studied and discussed a great deal, the popularity of programs using a demonstration class or a presenter giving instructions from the screen made me suspect that, even when automatic recording equipment in the schools made videotape available, teachers were using them in the same way they would broadcast. I'll be fascinated to find out whether the habit of this reliable broadcast service will hinder teachers in the U.K. from taking a stronger decision-making role in choosing media resources, as the new technologies become available in the classroom — for instance, video-disk storage and instant access by micro-computer to large numbers of "bits" of media resources. Perhaps the initiatives of the BBC School Radio department in providing night-time broadcasts, block-recording opportunities, and audiotape duplicating services — just begun in the autumn of 1983 — will begin a trend towards economies of scale in making learning resources available on tape.

People at all levels of the system were interested in our **Pacific Educational Media Centre (PEMC) Catalogue**, which includes films, videotapes, microwave, and audiotapes available provincially, and many wanted details on how we set up our evaluation and acquisition services. Comparing media resources available in our respective countries led to fascinating speculations about whether these times of restraint, along with recent multicultural developments in both countries, would actually lead to an opening-up of international exchanges of materials. It seems to me that in British Columbia, audiences are becoming more willing to accept foreign accents and situations. Is this a general trend, and will it continue?

Teacher-in-service videotape are increasing demand in the U.K. as they are in British Columbia, as school-district budgets decrease. I visited the BBC Open University Production Centre where in-service and self-study courses built around videotape are being produced for

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L'ASSOCIATION des MEDIA et de la TECHNOLOGIE en EDUCATION au CANADA
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On Behalf of

THE COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS TRUST

Commonwealth Relations Trust Travelling Bursary: Call for Applications

Canadians working in educational media are fortunate this year in being able to apply for a bursary from the Commonwealth Relations Trust, which was established by a private donation in the 1930s to promote a common understanding and a unity of ideals between the United Kingdom and other countries of the Commonwealth, through the extension of human contacts and first-hand experience of current conditions. AMTEC has been asked to sponsor an annual award for educational broadcasters which pays for a three-month study visit to the U.K., beginning in the spring of 1985. Other bursars visiting the U.K. will be broadcasters, adult educators, trade unionists, and librarians from several Commonwealth countries.

The Bursary will provide:

- one adult return fare, by the most direct and economical means, to the U.K.;
- allowances for local travel and other out-of-pocket expenses;
- daily maintenance allowance on a generous scale for a period of three months from date of arrival.

Candidates should:

- offer assurances that they will not suffer financial loss as a result of taking up the award, but will continue to receive a salary;
- be communicators in their profession and in a position to influence opinion in their field of endeavour;
- have a reasonable level of education in order to make the best use of their stay in the U.K., and be able to act on their own initiative;
- not have been previously to the U.K., except for a short holiday visit.

Applications should include:

- a short statement of the applicant's proposed objectives in applying for a bursary, what she or he hopes to obtain from the experience, and what they feel they can contribute to the aims of the Trust;
- the special area or areas of study to be pursued;
- any known contacts in the U.K.;
- previous travel abroad, including any visit to the U.K.;
- address to which correspondence should be sent;
- a full curriculum vitae, including education and work experience, with dates.

The award winner will be expected to prepare his or her own program, obtaining advice about whom to visit, well in advance of his or her arrival in the U.K. by the end of April, 1985. A ten-page report must be submitted on conclusion of the visit.

If you would like to apply for this award, please forward the documentation described above to:

Merrill Fearon
Chairman, AMTEC Committee for the
CRT Bursary
c/o The Provincial Educational Media Centre
7351 Elmbridge Way
Richmond, British Columbia V6X 1B8

Deadline for Applications:

Friday, September 21, 1984

NEW PUBLICATION

Courses in Educational Technology in Canadian Universities

Content: A comprehensive handbook on educational technology courses offered at 40 Canadian Universities. Information is current as of 1983 and includes: course listings; course level; credits designated; course duration and usual semester available. Contact persons for further inquiries are also included.

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the Open University's new School of Education. These packages are of particularly high quality and must appeal to teachers, for they are expected to pay their own way through teacher purchases. My visits to the Open University were a pleasure: energy levels were high, and producers, subject specialists, and course managers seemed to be greatly enjoying a course-team method of working whereby colleagues with different roles and areas of expertise associate by invitation, and for which communication skills must be developed to a high degree.

It was an interesting time to be studying educational media in the U.K., because patterns of use were rapidly changing, and existing broadcast agencies were busy reaching out to explore the new-technology areas. Microcomputers, for instance: I talked to BBC Continuing Education department producers who were just finishing the "Making the Most of the Micro" computer literacy series, part of a project which led to the development and marketing of a special BBC Microcomputer System. The BBC was advertising its upcoming Telesoftware Service, which would broadcast computer programs to viewers with BBC Microcomputers. And people at the Open University were producing teacher in-service packages for the "Micros in the Schools" project.

My visit to the U.K. made me realize the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between developing our own "patch" (a common-garden British expression which I happily collected) and keeping in touch with what's going on in the field world wide. Back in my own patch now, I often make use of the documents, anecdotes, and ideas I picked up in the course of my study visit. And I look forward to sharing whatever information might be useful with the next Canadian to explore the other side of the educational-broadcasting mountain.

"TIME TO QUIT"

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The Educational Media
Producers and Distributors
Association of Canada

L'Association des
Producteurs et distributeurs
du media d'education
du Canada

The AMTEC Achievement Award Call For Nominations

The AMTEC Achievement Award is presented in recognition of outstanding ability in promoting the use or creative development of audio visual media in the classroom in the kindergarten, elementary, secondary, post-secondary or training environments. The successful recipient(s) will have made a significant contribution to the learning process employing audio visual media in the classroom.

The AMTEC Achievement Award is sponsored by the Educational Media Producers and Distributors Association of Canada (EMPDAC). The following are the general criteria for the Award:

1. The Award is in the form of an engraved plaque or plaques awarded annually by AMTEC at the National Conference.
2. The Award can be made to up to 5 recipients per year.
3. Nominations may be made by any member of AMTEC or EMPDAC. Nominations are made by the nominator submitting a letter to the AMTEC Achievement Award Chairman. The nominating letter and accompanying documents should indicate the following:
 - a. The name, address and telephone number of the nominator and the nominee.
 - b. A brief biographical sketch of the nominee.
 - c. A comprehensive description of the nominee's contribution including:
 - i. The purpose of the contribution
 - ii. Implementation and timeline details.
 - iii. The utilization strategy and/or creative development of the contribution.
 - iv. Evaluation of the success and/or results of the contribution.
 - d. Names, addresses and telephone numbers of the three individuals who are familiar with the nominee's contribution and who are willing to act as references for the nominee.
4. The AMTEC Achievement Award's Committee is appointed by the AMTEC Board and consists of at least three persons one of which will be a present member of the AMTEC Board.

Nominations for AMTEC's 1985 Achievement Award should be forwarded with the documentation noted above to:

Danielle Fortosky, AMTEC Achievement Award Chairman
Director of Educational Television Production
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7N 0W0