

Educational Communications Personnel: The New Internationalists

by Arthur Shears

INTRODUCTION

People who work in the area of educational communications go by many names — producer, researcher, lecturer, media specialist, educational technologist and so on. Something all these people had in common was their mobility, one year working perhaps as a media producer in a medical school in Halifax, the next year acting as a consultant in media for the Calgary School Board. However, today the ability to move around is becoming more restricted. Budget cuts and back to basics movements threaten areas which are seen as extras, media and communications included.

So what does an educational technologist (producer, researcher, media specialist . . .) do when one becomes redundant or simply needs a change? Usually, it means searching the papers for a job in Thunder Bay, Winnipeg or wherever. Some daring few might even check things out in Labrador City or Yellowknife. But are these the only alternatives? Why not Macao, Singapore, Botswana, Kenya, Jamaica or Papua New Guinea?

You might be surprised, but in the last few years all of these countries have advertised for people in the area of educational communications and technology.

WHY WORK OVERSEAS?

A person can have various reasons for seeking a job abroad, even if one is available to him in Canada. One reason might be simply to have a change.

Learning resource center managers will find differences in equipment, personnel, and attitudes. For example, most member countries of the Commonwealth, whether in Africa, the West Indies or the Far East operate on a 220/240V electrical system. A manager will still find Sony, JVC, and Philips equipment but in different models

Arthur Shears has an M.A. in Educational Technology from Concordia University and hails from the heart of the Maritimes — Cape Breton. He has held volunteer and staff positions with CUSO in West Africa. His last job in Canada was as Media Specialist at Holland College, Charlottetown.

He is currently Senior Adviser in Learning Resources at the World Bank sponsored Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute, Ilorin, Nigeria.

and standards. Nigeria, as an example, uses the British type PAL-B standard for television.

Media producers will find work very challenging in a number of respects. They will often have to program for people whose mother tongue is not English. Another aspect is production variables. What can one say about visually illiterate students? Will they be confused by a fade from a wide shot of an instructor doing a chemistry experiment to a close up showing at table full of test tubes and flasks? This is an interesting point, which illustrates the need for researchers to test a lot of the accepted production practices used in the Western World. In fact, the possibilities for research overseas seem endless.

Most professionals need to feel that their work is having an impact. Although it is not always the case, many people working in educational communications are breaking new ground on their jobs overseas. How often does one get the opportunity to get in at the ground floor of a new "Open University" style college, for example, the Open College — Macau? What about being in charge of a Learning Resources and Communication Unit that uses Video, Audio and Satellite to reach some 5,000 students scattered around eleven countries in the South Pacific? In situations like these, is the chance to help develop thousands of people who otherwise might not get the chance for higher or sometimes even basic education.

WHAT SORT OF WORK?

As might be expected from the Canadian experience, there are a range of posts overseas in the area of educational communications and technology. Although the following list is by no means exhaustive, it is representative of typical posts advertised in recent years:

- University/Post-Secondary level Academic Posts
- Administration of Media production/Educational Technology Units
- Media Production
- Distance Learning
- Program Development Officers (Learning Packages)
- Research and Development

Academic Posts are usually in departments of education, educational technology or mass communications. The following description was for a job at a College in Botswana:

"Emphasis is on management of personnel and media; servicing of AV equipment; micro-teaching ex-

perience; preparation and use of teaching resources, reprographic services and TV studio. The appointee will be required to participate in teaching practice and supervision and to teach AVAC courses in the Department".

Another description for a lecturer at the University of Sierra Leone reads as follows:

"Applicants must have post-graduate degree with specialization in Educational Technology and working experience in the production and use of adaptive visual aids at all levels of education. Apointee will be required to design and teach theories of audio-visual perception and application to educational objectives in Sierra Leone. Administrative responsibility for supervision and upgrading the production staff operating in the printing, graphics, photographs and projection section".¹

Two points are raised in this latter description: these are required experience and qualifications. Virtually all academic posts require at least a Master's degree and many require a Ph.D. Apart from teaching and research experience, employers also often seek relevant in-country experience or at least experience in another developing country.

Purely teaching and research posts without responsibility for in-house AV Centres are also available.

Administrative posts generally are associated with larger institutions. The Nanyang Technical Institute, Singapore, recently advertised for a head of their education technology unit:

"The candidate should have at least ten years experience in educational technology in a tertiary institution. He will take charge of audio-visual material and equipment that are used to assist or improve both the teaching and the learning processes in the Institute. He will also be responsible for the planning and development of the Unit in relation to the overall development of the Institute in the next five years. This is a senior appointment which carries a salary scale of Associate Professor".

Media Production Personnel are often classified as lecturers for want of a better title. The School of Education, at the University of the West Indies were seeking a lecturer to do the following:

... prepare audio visual program-

mes and materials for use in the school of Education, and facilitate their use in the Teacher's Colleges of the Western Carribean; train students in the School of Education in the use of Audio Visual materials, eventually to establish and operate an effective Learning Resource Centre in the School of Education."

Also CUSO, a large Canadian development agency, often has openings in the area. They are particularly interested in people who can prepare simple learning materials for literacy, numeracy and adult education. Requests have come to them from locations as far apart as the Sudan, Gambia, and Nicaragua.

Distance Learning, often following the Open University model, is becoming more popular in the Third World as a way of reaching the thousands, even millions, demanding formal education.

Nigeria has plans in the works for establishing its own Open University but due to some legislative and financial road-blocks this has not yet taken off.

One institution that is getting off the ground is the Open College, Macau, which began to fill some of its first posts by June, 1982.

"Appointments will be made in each of the main schools of the College — Arts, Business, Education, Mathematics, Sciences and Technology — and, initially, no restriction is placed upon the specialization within which appointments will be made".

Applicants are expected to have experience and a lively interest in distance education at the university level.

The Learning Resources and Communication Section mentioned earlier is operating in the South Pacific and is part of the University of the South Pacific — Extension Division. The division has 38 senior and 44 support staff, located at the Laucala Campus (Fiji) and at ten regional centres. One of their activities is running an experimental teleconferencing network by satellite. The University recently advertised for a director of extension services.

Programme Development in the form of learning packages is an ongoing activity of the Hong Kong Polytechnic. Recently, the institution was looking for people with

"wide experience or qualifications in instructional development to initiate, stimulate and co-ordinate the production of learning packages for

utilization or the Polytechnic's wide range of evening courses". They went on to say:

"The successful candidates should be able to conduct a needs assessment, learner analysis, task analysis, content review, media design, selection and evaluation. The material referred to will be produced by the subject specialists, in cooperation with the Programme Development Officers, on a commissioned basis and copyright and royalty agreements will be determined for each package".

Research and Development of learning materials are not restricted to polytechnics or universities. Many developing countries are now trying to provide education that not only assists the individual but also improves the community. In 1978, the Papua New Guinea Department of Education started a four year pilot project called the "Secondary Schools Community Extension Project" (SSCEP). They are attempting to innovate secondary education in five schools so that it is more practical in orientation without a decline in standards. It is hoped that graduates will as a result have skills and attitudes more appropriate to village development.

Four individuals were required: a coordinator, and experts in curriculum, education measurement, and educational psychology. The expert positions were particularly challenging since:

"In each case the expert will be required to travel widely within Papua New Guinea visiting schools, convening workshops, and generally ensuring SSCEP aims are being implemented at all levels. This travel may include visits to remote outstations where the quality of accommodation cannot be guaranteed".

The quality of accommodation and other house-keeping matters, terms of service, salary, gratuities etc. are all important considerations for anyone considering overseas work. Though not mentioned in any depth in this article, they should be given careful thought since many contracts are for two or three years.

Another example of a recent job in R & D was for a research and evaluation officer at the Botswana Extension College. Candidates needed relevant experience preferably in adult education or community developments in a developing society.

"Duties of the post include:

research on adult education needs pertaining to work planning at the College, evaluation of all BEC courses in co-operation with Course Development Officers and the Course Editor, analysing the cost benefit of courses, field-testing of instructional materials and illustrations, training and supervision of junior staff and preparation of progress reports on student participation".

For individuals who would like to feel their work has an impact at the grass roots level, projects similar to those just mentioned can be recommended.

WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

If one happens to be a UK citizen, the British Council offers a large number of posts in a variety of countries. Most of their positions are in various aspects of English Language training. For those who fall into this category, use this address: Overseas Educational Appointments Dept.,

The British Council,
65, Davies Street,
London W1Y 2AA. England.

Another British establishment that does recruitment is Crown Agents:

Crown Agents,
Recruitment Division,
4 Millbank,
London SW1P 3JD. England.

For those of us who are Canadian, there do not seem to be any similar organizations. The closet thing is perhaps the Canadian International Development Agency. However, as recently as last year they had a very low priority for education type projects; technical education is the exception.

Individuals who prefer to do a two year "volunteer" assignment to get a taste of overseas life and gain that often essential overseas experience can write to an organization called CUSO. This route is definitely not for money-seekers but generally one is given enough to maintain a simple but reasonable standard of living. CUSO return volunteers are fond of saying their experience will last a life time.

CUSO,
151 Slater Street,
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada, K1P 5H5

For those who prefer to try an overseas posting "cold", there are often advertisements in the major Canadian

(Continued on page 27)

Lane, Nancy	<i>Mediography: Media on Meetings & Presentations</i>	13(4)21
	<i>Mediography: Media on Distance Education</i>	13(1)17
	<i>Mediography: Media on Educational Innovation</i>	13(3)13,16
	<i>Mediography Media on Instructional Design</i>	13(2)21
Lewis, Patricia Dolan	<i>Book review</i>	13(1)18,20
Lewis, Richard F.	<i>Segment TV = Teacher Interest + Student Learning</i>	13(1)4-7
McNutt, Robert	<i>Towards a Woolly Objective</i>	13(4)8-9
Metallinos, Nikos	<i>Children's Perception, Retention and Preference of Asymmetrical Composition in Pictures</i>	13(1)10-15
Michayluk, J.O.	<i>Impact of LOGO Program on Native Adults</i>	13(3)4-6,15
Michener, James	<i>Alligator</i>	13(1)21-24
Nelson, Barbara	<i>Book review</i>	13(4)14
Nostbakken, David	<i>The Role of Mass Media in Smoking Problems of Children</i>	13(2)4-13
Osted, Peter	<i>Book review</i>	13(4)14
Perreault, Robert	<i>Videotex as a Tool for Health Promotion</i>	13(2)14-15
Proctor, Leonard F.	<i>Courses in Microcomputers in Education in Canadian Universities</i>	13(3)supplement
	<i>Microware (Reviews)</i>	13(1)19-20;(2)19;(4)19
Rich, Tom	<i>Education and the Impact of Computer Technology</i>	13(4)2-5
Schieman, Erv	<i>Classroom Simulation Update: Can Technology Revive this Seldom Used Instructional Technique</i>	13(1)7-9,26
Schwier, Richard	<i>Courses in Microcomputers in Education in Canadian Universities</i>	13(3) Supplement
Shears, Arthur	<i>Educational Communications Personnel: the New Internationalists</i>	13(4)6-7,27
Soudack, Avi	<i>Formative Research on Telidon and Education</i>	13(3)10-11,14-15
Wilson, Elinor	<i>Time to Quit</i>	13(2)26-27,30
Wright, Patrick	<i>From the Media Periodicals</i>	13(1)16-17;(2)20
Wyman, Raymond	<i>The Long Slow Road to Technical Standards</i>	13(4)8-9,27
Yackulic, R.A.	<i>Impact of a LOGO Program on Native Adults</i>	13(3)4-6,15

New Internationalists

Continued from page 7

newspapers: The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) puts out a monthly newspaper which contains advertisements from foreign universities. Departmental bulletin boards in universities and colleges also sometime contain letters from overseas' faculties seeking new staff or staff exchanges.

Another good source is foreign newspapers, particularly British ones. Recommended are the Observer, the Guardian and especially the Times Higher Educational Supplement. Most Canadian Universities and larger Colleges house these newspapers and others in their periodical section.

The above are only a few suggestions. One final idea is to seek out somebody who has been overseas in order to "tap his brain". Such individuals often have useful information or even personal contacts abroad.

SUMMARY

Professionals in the field of educational communications and technology have the chance to contribute to development in many overseas and third world countries. The opportunities are many and range from academic posts to grass-roots research and development of local curriculum and materials. For the right people, these are tremendous possibilities for personal and professional growth.

¹All quotations are taken from advertisements in the weekly *Times Higher Educational Supplement*; from the years 1979 and 1981. □

Media News

Continued from page 17

10th Annual Grierson Documentary Seminar. Recent documentaries on any subject as well as docudramas will be considered.

The Seminar is named after John Grierson, the founder of the British documentary and the National Film Board of Canada. His interest in the medium's potential for social change has shaped the direction of much Canadian and world documentary production.

The Seminar provides film — and video-makers with a forum to debate Grierson's influence as directors are invited to present their work for screening and to engage in critical discussions about contemporary and historical documentary practice with their peers, media educators, writers and programmers. (Since the effect of these discussions is cumulative, all guests are required to attend the Seminar for the entire week.)

For further information contact:

Bart Tesa,
Innis College,
University of Toronto,
2 Sussex Avenue,
Toronto, Ont. M5S 1J5
(416) 978-8574/7023 □

Media Workshop

Continued from page 10

gram in Action—A Longterm Study. Unpublished Manuscript, 1983.

²Baron, L. **Research and Development of a Cable Distribution System to Involve Children in the Learning of Concepts of Communication and Accompanying Skills.** Montreal: Concordia University, Education Department, June, 1982. □

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Denis:

Canadian Data has just applied for a corporate membership of A.M.T.E.C. following our most successful representation in London, Ontario. We were very impressed with the response to our product "M.R.C.S. — Media Reservation and Catalogue System", that we would like to insert a regular monthly advertisement in "CJEC".

Sincerely yours,
Trevor Barnett
Marketing Manager

Technical Standards

Continued from page 9

2. Standards must be made by consensus between manufacturers and consumers.

3. Standards must be international.

4. Consumers must somehow be supported for standards work. Participation is expensive.

5. Developing countries are in particular need of standards, and they do not yet participate.

6. The separate international standards organizations known as IEC and ISO must be combined.

7. CSA and UL should combine and/or coordinate their work to avoid duplication and differences.

8. Consumers will not get any more standards than they demand and are willing to work for.

9. Standards must not hinder the development of new and better products.

This paper was presented at the 1983 AMTEC conference in Montreal. □

Board of Directors 1984-85

President

Mr. Bill Hanson
Supervisor of Instructional Materials
Calgary Board of Education
610 - 9th Street S.E.
Calgary, Alberta T2G 3C5

Past President

Dr. Barry Brown
Head, Department of Educational Communications
College of Education
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0W0

President-Elect

Prof. Ed Crisp
Faculty of Education
University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario

Secretary/Treasurer

Mr. Ron Eyre
Educational Media Consultant
Wellington County Board of Education
500 Victoria Road
North Guelph, Ontario N1E 6K2

Board Member

Mr. Robert Jones
Co-Ordinator, Courseware Design and Production Program
Sheridan College

Board Member

Ms. Judy Benson
Senior Research Officer
Policy and Evaluation Branch
Advanced Education and Manpower
1855 Victoria Ave.
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3V5

Board Member

Ms. Danielle Fortosky
Director, Educational Television
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0W0

Editor: Canadian Journal of Educational Communication

Dr. Denis Hlynka
Faculty of Education
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2