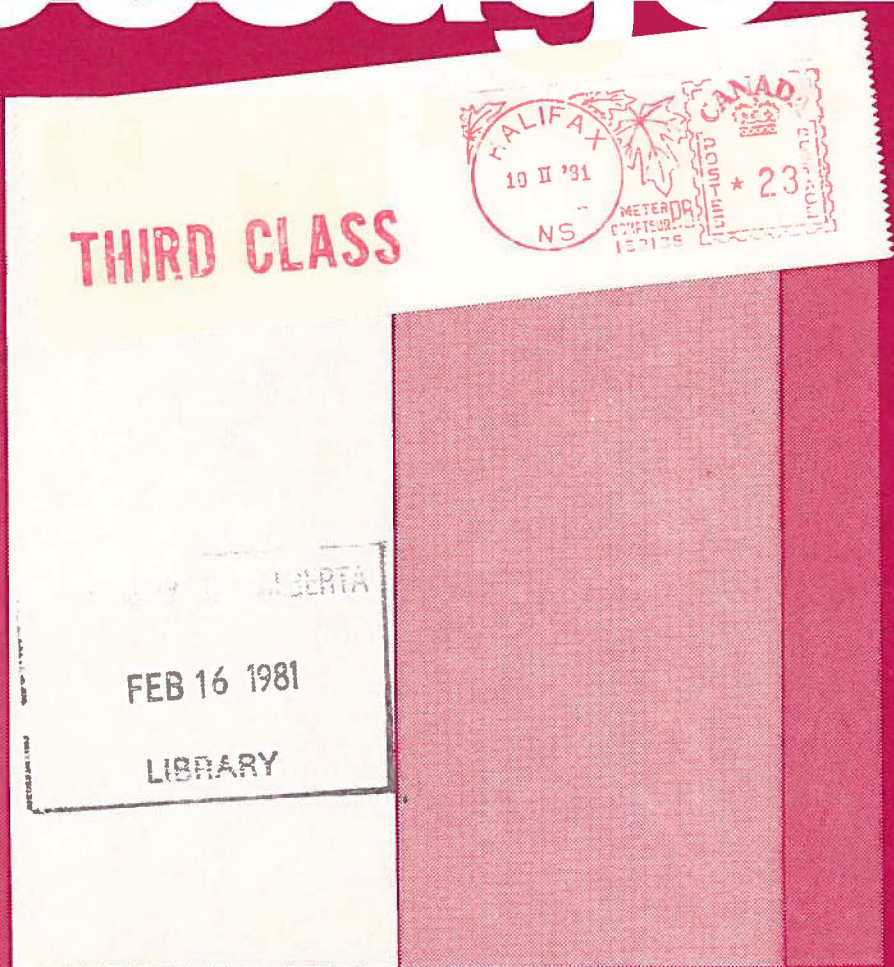


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Media Message

Volume 10, Number 2
1981



Editor
Richard F. Lewis

Managing Editor
Patricia A. Dolan Lewis

Associate Editors
Lois Baron
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Typography
Hanington Publications

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Media Message and Newsletter

February 1
April 1

Articles, book reviews, letters to the editor,
etc. for publication in *Media Message* and
Newsletter should be sent to:

Dr. Richard F. Lewis
Atlantic Institution of Education
5244 South Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 1A4

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the Association for Media and Technology
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Television Literacy Belongs in the Elementary Classroom

Lois J. Baron

Children are spending more time in front of television sets than they will have spent in school by high school graduation. Millions of dollars and much time and effort has already been directed at answering questions related to the issue of effects of television on children. Educators are somewhat concerned; parents are extremely concerned. We hear of possible modelling effects of television on children to the point where individual cases have been brought to court. Individuals and organizations concerned with television content and its possible effects on children are lobbying and making themselves heard by local and federal governments. It has reached the point where computerized devices have been invented which are programmed to turn off or on television sets at particular times of the day. There is indeed concern! Much of this concern has been directed at trying to assess the effects of television on children or figuring out means of turning television sets off (as exemplified by the electronic gatekeeper.)

My question is, why not deal with the "victims" themselves? Is it not time that we as educators assumed the responsibility of instilling in children as critical an eye about what they see on T.V. as we do with other forms of communication? With all the televiewing times logged by children, should they not be taught an appreciation of the medium as one would teach an appreciation and understanding of art, music or drama? I feel it is time that television awareness curriculum were introduced into the classroom. If television and its possible effects on children is taken seriously, educators should make it their responsibility to teach children about the media, its powers, and limitations. "Too much critical time has been wasted worrying about the worst of television. More attention should be paid to the best" (Cater, 1975, p.6)

Television An Artform

The interaction between the child and television ought to be considered equivalent to the interaction between the child and other forms of art — be it a painting, a sculpture, a poem. The process of interaction between the creator and receiver of the message ought to be a creative one for both. It is the latter who assimilates the message

into his/her own frame of reference. Good art is not manipulative. It is not intended to shape behavior, but rather to incite the perceiver to freely search out meaning behind the canvas, music sheet, or marble. Art that does not abide by such rules becomes nothing less than brainwash and a subject of concern to those worried about its possible effects.

Teachers Are Artists

The teaching-learning process is a mode of communication which must embrace the above dimensions of art as a creative process. The creative teacher embodies the same characteristics as a good artist. First and foremost, the teacher must not be manipulative, but rather catalytic in instilling or cultivating within the pupils an ability for individual and creative problem-solving. A good teacher, like an artist, is capable of providing meaningful learning experiences by being conscious of the processes not only the products of on-going inter-personal communication with students. Teachers ought to instill within students a desire to learn and a need for creative expression. Unfortunately either because of insecurity, ignorance or both, teachers often provide their students with minimally stimulating learning experiences which not only stifle the pupils' imagination, but also deny the freedom to explore and interact with the students' environment.

The Great Teacher

Like teachers, television as a mode of instruction and an art form has come under much fire for not fulfilling its responsibilities as a facilitator in the creative process of interpersonal communication. It has the potential of being the medium most capable of allowing the artists and viewer to explore and express their own points of view, but ironically its capabilities can and have been employed such that it becomes a powerful and destructive monster. The blame for the lack of creativity surrounding television has been passed down from the writer, to one producer, to the censor board, and to the networks who in turn blame the public to whom they are "giving them what they want." The communication process characteristic of the interaction between television and viewer is hardly a creative one. As far as young children are

concerned little has been produced that allows children to expand their own self-awareness. In effect children become one and the same with the producer's world. They are highly influenced by the values and sense of moral order portrayed on the television screen.

Educators ought to concern themselves with the stringent constraints television puts on the creative development of children and begin being honest about the medium as an artform, about the producers and writers as creative artists, and about viewers as creative participants.

Child as Message Receiver

Documented statistics speak of many hours in front of the television sets by children, the very children we educators and researchers have spent so much time studying and analyzing in an attempt to provide the best possible environment in which to develop. As Wilbur Schramm (1961) so aptly pointed out in the early sixties, "What the child brings to the television is as important as what television brings to the child." (p.8)

The premise of looking at characteristics of the individual child holds true in any teaching-learning situation, and although not a component of formal education *per se*, television can have quite an impact on a changing, growing personality. The impact of television on young children is a particular concern because their values and cognitive skills are still being developed.

"Television's great power is its capacity to transport, to show the world to children — to display people and events, and ideas they have never encouraged before and are unlikely ever to have the opportunity to meet in person." (Lesser, 1972, p. 125).

Unfortunately, all too often, producers take advantage of these characteristics, and in combination with a little theory of child development, develop programs in order to sell products rather than provide relevant learning experiences for children.

Hans Furth (1976) has speculated on children's conceptions of social institutions. His findings have important implications for understanding the effects of television on children, because knowing how children perceive television gives us insights about their level of understanding of the

television process. Furth's findings also help us, as educators, to provide the necessary experiences which creatively foster further understanding of the media.

Curriculum

One possible way of taking advantage of and improving children's understanding of television and its "magic powers" is by developing a television-oriented curriculum. Characteristic of other curriculum areas, television should be studied as a subject in the same manner as one would analyze poetry, drama, or mathematical concepts.

Television should not only be thought of as method of instruction which stimulates recall, guides the learner, provides feedback, and has the capability of fulfilling other prerequisites of the general functions of instruction. Television has its own grammar, and it is only by understanding this grammar that children will ultimately become more aware and critical of what they see (Soloviov, 1974). Courses in media literacy (involving a hands-on approach for young children) are a means of educating children to become more discerning about the shows they watch and the technical elements behind the programs. If producers are fluent in the visual language, why cannot children? If the interaction between television and the child is to be a creative one and if television is to be brought as an art form, the child must be allowed to participate in the communication situation. Such involvement would result in heightened literacy, a critical eye, and greater fluency in the media language. Media literacy can and should be approached as a subject taught in school at a very early age.

Jean Piaget believes in the principle of children being allowed to act upon their environment in order to acquire knowledge and expectations about their world. The adage "children learn by doing" can also be applied to communication *WITH* television. Children ought to experiment with and manipulate media tools. If the period of sensori-motor and preoperational thought requires action and manipulation within the child's environment then what better way of doing so than by involving children in videotaping, or having them "create" a television script to be shown on

a television set they built during an art activity? Children identify with other children on television, and this is even more magnified in the delight shown on their faces when they see themselves on television. Very often the video playback of an instructional activity can reinforce concepts being taught. Allowing children to animate plasticine objects and video-recording them for playback would provide them with some insight into the secrets of the animation they see every Saturday morning in their home television sets. By means of both a "hands on" and intellectual approach to the study of television, young children would begin to make sense of the order in a television program and by so doing, they would eventually develop aesthetic tastes that would allow them to judge for themselves what they should or should not watch.

Teacher's Role

A teacher's primary function, as we know it, is to educate children. For some reason or another, television has taken a back seat to other subject areas presently handled in the curriculum. Why is this so if television is such a major force in our lives? If teaching is supposed to be the creative process that it should be, would not the manipulation of the medium's elements, both physically and intellectually enhance the creative process? Most teachers unfortunately do not use television as an adjunct to their teaching methodology or within their curriculum. Teachers should be taught to utilize video systems effectively and creatively in their classrooms, while at the same time, instill a sense of media acuity in their students.

Harding and Wainon (1972) present a system based on a curriculum model which teachers can use to instill television literacy in their students. Although designed primarily for older children, their model of content analysis exercises, based on the categorization of television programs, can and has been successfully adapted to earlier grade levels.

Faculties and colleges of education are partly to blame for not supplying potential teachers with the necessary skills for the creative use of television in the classroom. If media literacy were included in language

arts methods courses, student teachers would heighten their own awareness of the medium; knowledge of which they could then pass on to their students.

One student of mine who took the initiative of developing a television-based curriculum unit for a student-teaching assignment summed up her feelings by saying, "I feel that by using television as the theme, their attention was unbelievably fantastic. All children were participating, the excitement was fantastic."

In conclusion I ask, could many teachers share similar feelings across a range of subject areas?

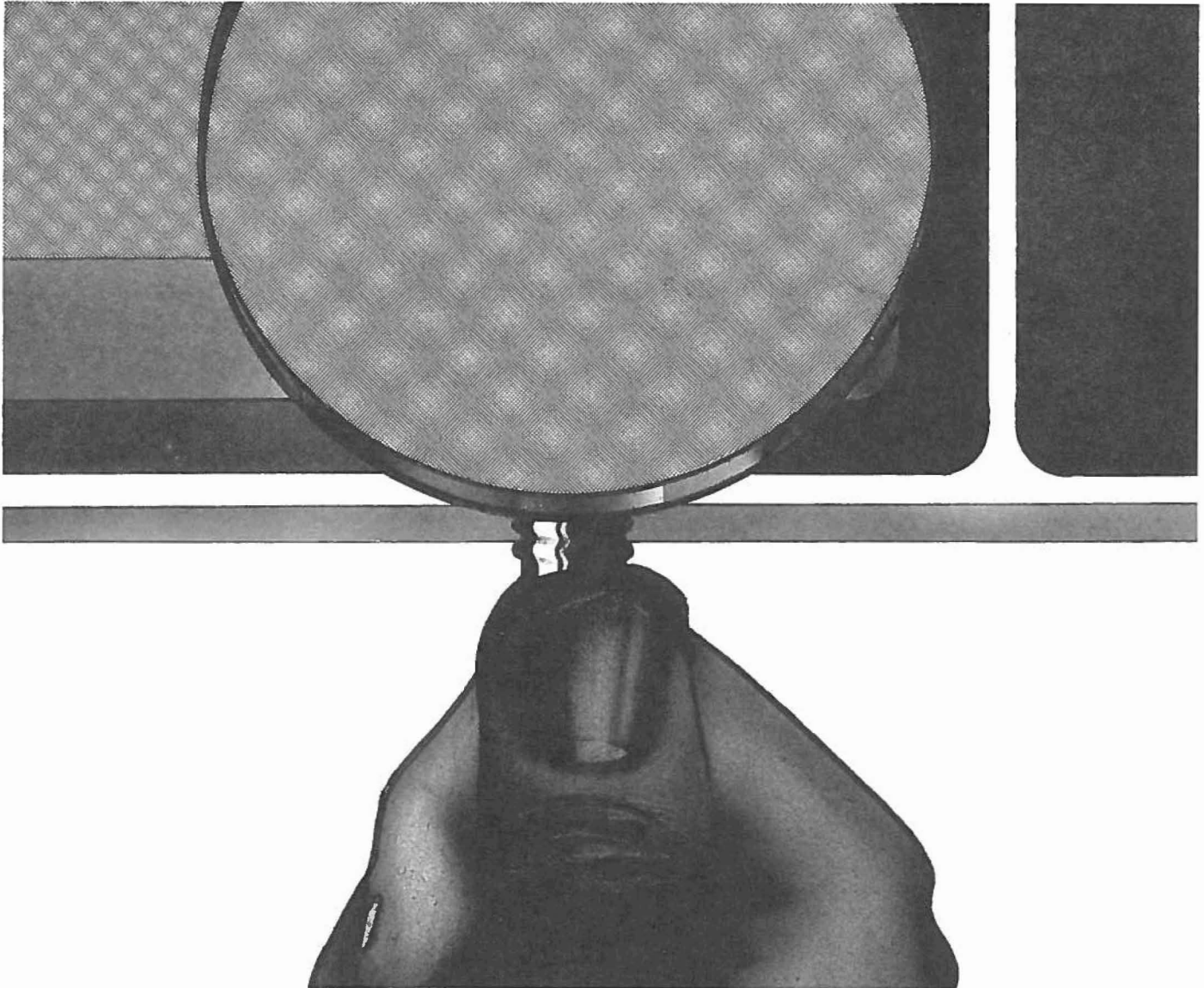
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Lois J. Baron is an Assistant Professor of Education and the Coordinator of the Child Studies Major at Concordia University in Montreal. Dr. Baron is also an Associate Editor of *Media Message*.

Literary and Video Elements: Factors of Critical Analysis of Commercial Television

Rhonda S. Robinson



Television literacy can be developed by attending to the power and the artistry of the television production elements that create the images. Commercial television has certain production conventions and programming practices that can be identified, discussed, and critically viewed, as they interact. These elements include genre conventions, format and programming conventions, and video production elements such as setting, camera and subject movement, composition, sound, and lighting. These interact, of course, but each element should be examined in some detail.

TV Conventions

Commercial television programs represent those same genres that were popular on radio, in vaudeville, and in early silent films, and even earlier in penny and dime novels. These genres: westerns, action-adventures, mystery-suspense, science fiction, situation comedy, and romantic serial or daytime drama each have their own conventions. Conventions are those expected or delimiting characteristics which define each genre; characteristics of plot, characters, and setting. For example, the conventions of the western might include: a small town in the west or southwest visited by the loner hero, an excellent horseman and gunhandler, who has no close friends and only transient love interest with either a saloon girl or school marm; ranchers and farmers in opposition; and other "stock" characters such as a saloon owner-gambler, a bartender, a sheriff, a barber, a country doctor, a town drunk, a rough and tumble bad guy, and an innocent young cowboy. The plot involves the loner-hero helping the young cowboy, assisting the sheriff, killing the bad guy, and leaving the sweetheart, to continue roaming, free but troubled, through the untamed west. Does this sound familiar? The conventions of each genre are as easily recognized; those of setting,

characters, plot, and conflict can be delineated for the other genres as well.

Critical Analysis

Once these conventions are established, the critical analysis can focus on questions dealing with genre. Which genre do you watch most often? What shows still represent these genres? Are the conventions inherent in the genre easily discerned? Looking at the conventions, are there differences; has this program stretched the definition by using unique features or surprising twists in plot, character, and so on, or has this program relied solely on convention? Is this program just one more, predictable example of its genre, or is it exciting in its creative use of the conventions?

All commercial programs, regardless of their genre, are programmed and scheduled in certain formats for prime viewing potential. Since television is produced for commercial purposes — to sell products — the internal formats and the program schedules are determined by the commercial interruptions. Considerations such as regular prime time scheduling, and block scheduling, create a comfortable and regulating viewing pattern, one that is both rhythmic and habit-forming. The repetition of scheduling, the blocking of nights of genres like situation comedies or action shows form part of this rhythm.

The internal rhythm of any genre is determined by the number and length of breaks for commercials. The literary elements of plot, character, setting, conflict, and denouement are all influenced and time-limited by these breaks. The editing pattern of programs, from introductory segment to climatic ending, is also determined by commercial breaks. For example, breaks in an hour-long program are preceded often by climatic sequences and do not occur exactly at the half-hour, to prevent channel switching. Also, the opening segments are usually

short shots, fast-paced and rapidly edited, in order to attract the viewers to the program.

Viewer Reaction

Briefly, then, the plotting, the timing, and the internal pacing of most programs are determined by economic, not aesthetic, considerations. Often, just pointing this out to students causes concern and surprise. They sometimes still believe that television is free, not considering the increased cost of products due to advertising. Ask students to watch for the timing or pacing, and the predictability of the breaks, as they are announced by music or special dissolves or wipes. Ask students to contrast the recurring commercial breaks to chapters in a book; does an author have to "break" a certain number of times?

The genre limitations and the format and scheduling restrictions form the framework for the actual video production elements utilized to create the images we see. The settings, the movements, the sound track, the shot types, the lighting patterns and the pacing are all effected by commercial restrictions of economic or time constraints.

The shot is still the basic element of the video production. Commercial television often uses the long shot, medium shot, close-up-shot sequence to establish scene and character. For variation, this sequence is sometimes reversed. Camera placements are often predictable and unimaginative; eye-level straight shots. Asking students to watch for interesting, subjective, and moving camera shots will help them become aware of where the camera is placed, for what types of shots. Action sequences are often created through editing long shots together, intercut with quick close-ups or cut-away shots. Again, asking students to become aware of types of shots and variety of utilization will help them understand

television. For instance, let them discover how daytime dramas are shot almost exclusively in close-up shots.

Production Techniques

Camera movements: the pan, tilt, dolly, zoom, tracking and even the moving helicopter and underwater swimming shots create excitement, interest, and action. We follow the characters; the camera mimics our eye movement. Zoom shots are utilized more often because the video cameras are well equipped for them; zooms are easier than moving the camera. Zoom shots do draw our attention, but they are sometimes unrealistic and out-of-place. A dolly or tracking shot would be better used, but often is too time consuming when shooting outside a studio. Camera movement is often used instead of subject movement, in static settings, to create interest also.

Subject movement, however, is what precipitates plot. The action can be dynamic or static, depending upon the way the action is staged and shot. Dynamic action is created by non-symmetry, action occurring diagonally as opposed to horizontally across the screen, by movement out of the frame, or near the edge of the frame, rather than at dead center to the frame. Static is created by just the opposite. Television sometimes uses what is expected: symmetrical composition, action in the center of the frame, rather than shots and movement which might help create real tension or drama.

Lighting plays a part in the movement and shot types utilized; it is the lighting which allows the composition and action to be seen. Television lighting is often fairly flat; that is, not enough background lighting is used to create depth. Another characteristic of television lighting is lack of shadows; the interplay of light and dark is rarely used, and characters are often in full light. Perhaps shooting on location in sun-

ny California has a part in this! Probably, however, the flat lighting is more the result of the intense light level needed for color cameras, and of the lack of time necessary to produce interesting effects. Economics and scheduling severely limit the time spent on any one segment.

The sound tracks in television are recognizable; a series like a situation comedy has a theme song and/or a closing song that we can identify. This helps the genre identification as well; the mood of the music foretells the type of show. The music and sound effects heard during a program often create mood, tension, laughter; however, they most of all prepare us for commercial breaks, those preceded by a climactic climb in musical rhythm or pace. The music, just like the pacing and the editing, is inserted and planned for those breaks.

Television program settings are created by a combination of the already mentioned lighting, music, and internal composition of objects, color and scenery. They are utilized just like literary settings, to establish time, place, create mood, and project action. The regularity of the theme music, the introductory sequence establishing the show name, characters, and place, utilizing titles, and the regular, repeated, settings, all help create the comfort we feel, our instant identification of the setting. Whether home, apartment, office, street, these settings are very flat and have a stagey, familiar look, as very much repeated scenes. The colors used can also set the mood for the genre — bright colors for comedy, red or purple textures for royal dramas, subdued tones for mystery, washed out or drab color for westerns. Costumes repeat this cuing, and either blend in or noticeably contrast, depending upon the character.

All these video production elements are utilized and edited together to create a

familiarity, which then causes us to become comfortable, and therefore repeated, viewers. We learn to expect certain music, followed by a certain sequence of shots, edited at a regular pace, to start a program. The pace is elevated for climax; the shots are lingering for tragedy, or close-up for drama. Learning to pay closer attention to shot types, composition, and lengths; to hear the sound effects and mood music; to become aware of the camera and subject movement; to watch for color and lighting graduations; all this can help students become more critically aware of any genre program they view.

Summary

The activities suggested in this article, outlined briefly, combined with many other detailed in popular educational periodicals, publications, and materials, will help students gain awareness and understanding of television through active participation. Perceptive television viewing, class discussions, and actual production experiences will help students become more concerned, critical viewers, or non-viewers, or commercial television. Discussion of genres, themes, plots, characters, settings, and the video productions elements outlined here, will help students begin to become more critical viewers.

Rhonda Robinson is an assistant professor in Instructional Technology at Northern Illinois University. She has a particular interest in utilizing film and videotape for educational purposes.

Counterproduction: A Strategy for Media Prevention

Muriel Stringer



Media materials, and especially their production, carry a glamour all their own. Somehow, the very words "script-writer", "producer", and "on-camera" seem to have an aura of the silver screen even when the end product is not much more than a talking-head videotape with a very limited distribution.

Educators are far from immune to the temptations of technological tinkering, and educational media productions, perhaps because of the very nature of the producing organizations, seem particularly prone to personal and internal political considerations over-riding good judgement, common-sense, and accountability. A commercial broadcast that doesn't make the ratings rapidly goes into oblivion; an "educational" program which is little used expires much more slowly, if at all, partly because audience reactions may take a long time to filter back when any feedback system does exist, but also because educational media productions tend to have a good deal of ego involvement to the point that any negative evaluation of the product has a strong chance of being ignored. A media credit on the academic vitae is generally welcome; the discovery that the production was not as effective is hailed with a lot less enthusiasm.

Rationale

As always, an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of attempted cure, and it makes for more sense economically and instructionally to set up a vigorous mechanism to weed out "illegitimate" and ill-planned productions at the contact stage than to shut the project gate after the product is made. To be sure, the application of some tough counterproduction strategies may be looked on askance by staff members who find the whole notion of accountability distasteful. For most, however, the provision of a set of production criteria of-

fers a useful framework for planning and goes some way towards ensuring that those productions that do proceed are well thought through, thoroughly organized and, most important, justified in terms of instructional need.

The use of project specification forms or some similar way of trying to determine the necessity and feasibility of a proposed media production is by no means new. Such forms, however, tend to focus on the media component itself and give little attention to the fact that a media production is almost always only a *part* of a learning system and has to be looked on in terms of its role in the system rather than evaluated as a separate entity.

A major problem in trying to document the need and feasibility of any media component is the sheer number of questions that ought to be asked but rarely are. The volume of paper to be filled, if all aspects were to be properly examined, would be overwhelming. On the other hand, simply requesting the proposer to provide a rationale and learner goals and objectives is a very vague basis for deciding whether the production should be blessed or not. It is remarkably easy with a little practice and the right educational jargon to come up with a highly impressive list of supposed learner objectives which, if anyone ever looks at them again, are dealt with through other components of the course and not by the material which was originally purported to provide the learning experience. Fudging forms is not at all a difficult skill to acquire and it is hard to detect, even in retrospect, if the results of the approved production are not subjected to evaluation or, as is all too often the case, given only a skimpy survey as the pressure builds up to move on to yet another ill-planned effort.

Being required to face up, even verbally, to a probing and comprehensive set of ques-

tions from a group versed in the design of instructional systems is virtually unheard of. Those who are expected to make the academic media dreams come true may jib if the expectations are blatantly unrealistic. Too often their task is seen as not questioning but simply implementing as best they can; they are rarely in a position to exert any real counterproduction measures.

Proposed Format

As a compromise between the completion of reams of forms and a verbal screening done by a group which may not have developed a solid set of criteria and questions on which to base its decisions on approval, I suggest one format that might be considered. First, the use of two simple forms on need and feasibility, then sets of guide questions for use by the decision-making body, and finally a points' system and set of rules on which the final decision is to be based.

The core of the media needs assessment grid is the ten reasons most commonly given to support a media production request. Candidates are required to indicate, with supporting explanations, which of the reasons they wish to offer to substantiate their request. An open-ended "other" category would allow for the proffering of additional justification. The questions on the needs assessment grid are intended primarily for use by the approval committee but may, on request, be provided to anyone preparing a proposal.

Each reason should be assigned a value from one to ten depending on the intrinsic validity of the reason. For example, pacing is regarded as a highly valid rationale for utilization of a media component, a top rating of 10 might be possible; whereas motivation or some reason with a lesser potential for validity might be given a maximum value of five. The scale range should

not be printed on the proposal form since a high top scale value is likely to tempt fudging or invention of explanations to support a substantial score in that category. How the decision-making group arrives at the actual score allotted to any given reason will depend on how thoroughly the proposer is prepared to do his homework and support his submission. Proposals deficient in some aspects but otherwise promising may be returned with a request for additional information on specific points.

What should constitute an acceptable aggregate score on the needs assessment grid is a policy decision to be made by the institution before the grid is used. Any other "rules of the game"; e.g. the over-riding effect of a zero in some categories, should also be decided upon at the outset and documented for use by the approval group.

Need is fraught with subjectivity and the points' system attempts to remove this or at least to infuse some degree of uniformity into the decision-making process. The ten reasons listed are an effort to cover the types of rationale offered to support a media production request. How much validity should be attached to each in an instructional context is a decision each institution must make for itself, but even if non-instructional factors such as publicity are given a heavy weighting, the mere exercise of assessing the need is valuable.

Pre-planning Important

Feasibility, on the face of it at least, is somewhat less subjective or appears to be so because it calls for the provision of facts and figures of a less subjective nature. Budget, manpower, time, and facilities are obvious categories which should be addressed under media production feasibility. An often-forgotten but extremely important aspect of feasibility is the availability of some system to deliver the media compo-

nent to the learner. Assumptions that broadcast slots of suitable length and appropriate times will be available as required may prove to be naive if air-time is not negotiated well in advance of broadcast date. Similarly, beliefs on the prevalence of cable vision, tape recorders, learning centre equipment, and other delivery essentials may prove to be based on disconcerting misconceptions.

The planning implicit in the proposed counterproduction system is not intended as a stumbling block but rather as a basis for well validated, efficient media production. While the depth of planning may appear to be unnecessary, I maintain it is essential. Accusations that it is too time-consuming, dictatorial, or stultifying to creativity cannot really be supported. Time spent at this stage in production is repaid many times over in the smoothness of the resulting operation, and in the effectiveness of the product as a component of a learning system. Dictatorial it may well be, but surely an institution which is accountable for the quality of its instruction has also a responsibility to require an accountability of the activities of its staff. The complaint on inhibition of creativity is one, I believe is most often made by those who would like

to disguise woolly thinking and plain laziness under some supposedly creative mystique. Too often, a rejection of planning is simply a desire to have personal objectives be allowed to over-ride institutional ones and to evade the issues of the instructional validity of the production. For those who genuinely wish to channel their energies, creative or otherwise, into the provision of an improved instructional service through any medium, planning and justification should not be regarded as counterproductive but rather as a useful and necessary framework to guide their efforts.

Muriel Stringer is an instructional developer at Athabasca University.

THE INVISIBLE CHILDREN

Designed to encourage children to ask and learn about their handicapped peers, this 25 minute colour film features puppets-both disabled and non-disabled. Gary Burghoff, ("Radar" from TV series "M*A*S*H") hosts the program as the audience is allowed to pursue the natural curiosity about disability. A detailed leader's guide providing workshop suggestions and discussion questions for use with children and adult audiences is included. An excellent film for teachers, school administrators and boards dealing with mainstreaming of disabled children.

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MEDIA FEASIBILITY GRID

The three major constraints that generally affect the feasibility of a media production are budget, manpower availability and if no in-house facilities are available, access to outside studios or some other suitable production facility. In addition, the ability of the learner to receive the material, whether as part of an individual package or as a broadcast, is an important consideration in the planning of a media component in a distance learning course.

Budgetary Implications

What is the total budget for the production? (A budget breakdown should be provided to substantiate the figure given.)

What portion of the budget will the institution be liable for?

Is outside funding committed to any part of the production?

If the production is to be done jointly with outside agencies, indicate the budgetary responsibility of each.

What conditions, if any, are attached to outside funding or collaboration with outside agencies?

What rights to the final product will reside with the institution?

What rights to the final product will reside with other institutions?

If the media component or any part of it are to be purchased, what exactly are the rights being purchased and at what cost?

When are disbursements required to support the production/purchase? Indicate the portions of the budget that must be committed at particular times.

Include any validation documents relating to budget, e.g., letters of agreement from other institutions, signed copies of the block budget, etc.

Manpower Requirements

List all manpower that would be required for the production, with a specification of the proposed source and of the time period over which each service on the list would be required.

State clearly the functions of each group member involved in the production and provide a summary of the production model to be used (i.e., who writes the script, who reviews it, who finally approves it, etc.)

Describe the program format and state the interviewees/performers to be used. Include any letters of agreement from interviewees who are willing to appear.

Delivery Systems

Is the media component to be delivered on air? If so, is time available in the appropriate amount and in a suitable slot? Specify, with supporting documents, any air-time agreements already reached or in process.

What geographic areas are covered by the proposed broadcast system? How does this cover match the distribution of the expected target audience?

What is the normal listening profile of the station/time slot where the programs will be aired?

If the material is not intended for on-air delivery, how is it intended to reach the student (individually in mailed packages, in learning centres, through library loans, etc.)

If the material is intended for individual use in the home, what playing equipment does the student need?

If the material is intended for home use, what dubbing service is required? How is dubbing to be done?

If the material is to be transferred from one system to another (e.g., film to videotape or a British line system to a North American one) how is this to be done?

If the material is intended for use in learning centres, are centres available in the geographic areas where the student population is anticipated?

If learning centre delivery is planned, what special equipment is needed? Is this already available or is equipment purchase required?

Is the material to be made available to the student in more than one way? If so, how is he to be made aware of his options to access?

Production Facilities

What production facilities are required?

How are production facilities to be provided if no suitable in-house provision can be made?

Include any letters of agreement, cost estimates etc. relating to production facilities.

If any special equipment is required, state how this is expected to be provided.

Indicate clearly any special constraints imposed by the use of either in-house or outside facilities.

MEDIA NEEDS ASSESSMENT GRID

The ten most common types of reasons given to support a media component production request are listed below as points 1-10. The questions under each heading are used by the body screening the proposal to arrive at a rating. The aggregate acceptable score, the value of each factor, and any other "rules of the game" are specified by the assessing body and must be uniformly applied to all proposals.

1. Publicity value is high.

Rating Scale: 0-

What is the target audience?

What is the delivery system (cable, open, etc.)?

What are the proposed time slots?

What is the competition from other channels in these slots?

Why does the content have publicity potential?

Why does the program format have publicity potential?

What data is available on audience profiles for the proposed time slot?

What data is available to support the assumption that this type of program/time slot/delivery system has significant audience attraction?

What other publicity for the course is planned?

What is the cost of the other publicity?

Rating Given:

2. The media component has an important pacing function.

Rating Scale: 0-

How frequently is the media component used?

Is the media delivery controlled by the learner or not?

How does the media component articulate with other components of the course?

What student activities are directly dependent on the media component (assignments, exercises, etc.)?

What other pacing mechanisms are part of the instrumental systems (examinations, tutor calls, tests, etc.)?

Indicate at what intervals each of the pacing mechanisms operate.

Rating Given:

3. The media component has high motivational value.

Rating Scale: 0-

What aspects of the media programs are motivational?

What exactly is the student supposed to be motivated to do?

How is the motivational impact of the media component to be determined?

Rating Given:

4. The media programs are for enrichment.

Rating Scale: 0-

What content is being provided via the media component that will not be provided elsewhere in the course?

Are any credit-carrying activities attached to the media components? Specify.

Is the material to be supplied to all students? If not, indicate the conditions under which the student has access to it.

Is the student explicitly informed of the function of the media component?

Rating Given:

5. The change of medium repeats content and reinforces certain key concepts.

Rating Scale: 0-

List the key concepts that are being repeated.

In what other medium are these concepts being presented?

Why is this repetition considered necessary?

Why is this an appropriate method by which to offer such repetition?

Rating Given:

6. The material in the media component gives relevance to the course and places it in a Canadian context.

Rating Scale: 0-

What concepts taught elsewhere in the course are being applied to a Canadian context?

List the Canadian illustrations being used as examples of course concepts.

Why is the rest of the course non-Canadian in content?

What Canadian material is provided via other course components?

Why is it necessary to add Canadian material?

Rating Given:

7. The content of the media portion of the course is an essential part of the information provided to the student.

Rating Scale: 0-

Is the information in the programs tied to student performance objectives?

How is the student's attainment of these objectives to be assessed?

List in point form the information to be provided via the media programs.

Is any of the information presented elsewhere in the course?

Why is the medium chosen appropriate to the type of information being communicated?

Why is the medium chosen appropriate to the learner?

Rating Given:

8. Interaction with the media component encourages learner creativity.

Rating Scale: 0-

What is the learner intended to create?

How will the learner's creativity be manifested and determined?

What other course components are intended to increase creativity?

Is the promotion of creativity a major goal of this course?

Rating Given:

9. Interaction with the media component encourages problem-solving behavior.

Rating Scale: 0-

What problem-solving activities is the learner required to engage in?

How is the learner's problem-solving ability to be assessed?

What other instructional strategies are used in the course to teach problem-solving?

Is the acquisition of problem-solving skills a major goal of this course?

Rating Given:

10. Inclusion of a media segment in the course is part of a research project.

Rating Scale: 0-

What hypothesis is being tested via the media component?

Describe the process being used to gather and analyze data?

How will the results of this research be applicable to the design of other learning systems?

What documentation is there in the literature relevant to the proposed research?

How will the results of the research be disseminated?

When will the results of the research be made available?

Rating Given:

Total Rating:

President

Anne Davidson

Reporting on results as well as forecasting direction is offered as a blend of news from the boardroom of your Board of Directors. If it serves to assure that your business is being addressed with reasonable conscientiousness one objective is met; if it motivates question or comment then desirable dialogue may be underway.

The fall meeting of the Board took place in Toronto, October 23 and 24 when a variety of Association matters was discussed. Drafts of all sections of the conference package (AMTEC Conference Application, Conference Guidelines including Media Festival Guidelines, Conference Handbook) have been approved and are being issued to potential conference hosts. Further revisions will be based on recommendations from users.

Already under review are applications for 1982 and 1984. A few minor technicalities are being discussed and information on the sites will be published in the next issue of *Media Message*. It has been established that Montreal will be the location of AMTEC '83 with the universities of McGill and Concordia co-sponsoring the event.

Continuing in the conference theme, I wish to advise that the budget outline for AMTEC '81 was presented to the Board.

Comprehensive in detail, it reflects a realistic and well considered estimate. Also received in time for the Board meeting were the reports from AMTEC '80 General Chairman and his committee chairmen. The interim financial report was accompanied by a substantial cheque with indication of an additional amount once the final audit has been completed. Solvency is indeed a comforting condition!

The revised *Constitution* is now ready to be presented to the membership for consideration. It will be mailed along with the ballots for the election of officers.

In the interest of conserving time for the many tasks on hand it has been decided to compile a manual relating to policies and procedures which will serve as an information base and guidelines for officers and directors. Documents such as Conference Guidelines and Media Festival Guidelines will be referenced. As matters arise which require resolving, the decisions will be recorded in the appropriate section and so the *Handbook* will materialize. In its final draft form is the Editor's section which addresses responsibilities for the publications, budgeting, reporting, qualitative standards. The Board has accepted the recommendation that an advisory committee be formed

to assist editors in setting policy for acceptance and rejection of articles and to provide support or guidance as required for the maintenance of quality in the publications.

Approval has been given to travel expense guidelines. These statements aside from satisfying an immediate need will be recorded in the manual and considered permanent until reviewed.

An area perceived in urgent need of administration is advertising; consequently a committee has been struck to explore all facets.

Members of the Board were happy to welcome CSLA president Ted Monkhouse to a day of sessions (Earlier in October, Bill Hanson, our new Board member, attended CSLA executive meeting when it was held in Calgary). Ted Monkhouse assured members of the value of such visits. Keeping informed of each other's objectives and being ready to muster forces for cooperative projects is vital. A case in point is the joint publication *Resource Services for Canadian Schools*. And Fred Branscombe, co-editor of that reference and a past president of AMTEC, dropped in to deliver a cheque, AMTEC's share of royalties. A very good way to end that particular day.

Editor

Richard F. Lewis

The editorial staff and the AMTEC Board want to see the journal continue to improve. We also wish to widen the involvement of the membership in the journal.

Editorial Advisory Committee

At my suggestion, the AMTEC Board has established an editorial advisory committee for *Media Message* and the *Newsletter*. The purpose of this advisory committee will be to evaluate the journal and the *Newsletter* in the light of the concerns of the membership. Specifically the committee will be asked to critically review each issue of the journal and the *Newsletter* using a structured evaluation form and their own comments. This information will be forwarded to the editor for action. The committee will also meet at every AMTEC conference to help set editorial policy.

The editorial advisory committee

presents a chance for you to become directly involved in matters related to the publications of AMTEC. Please let me know if you are willing to serve on the committee.

Submitting articles

During the past year, we have tried to present a variety of articles in each issue. With the exception of the first issue, we have received more information than we can published in a particular issue. This pleasant situation means that only the best articles get published in *Media Message*. Articles which are not accepted are returned to the author for modifications.

All articles which are received are now sent out for review to the associate editors and other AMTEC members who have similar interests. In reviews, the authors' names are deleted. The review process takes approximately eight weeks.

Reviewing articles for *Media Message*

Reviewers are needed for articles submitted to *Media Message*. A reviewer is asked to evaluate the suitability of an article for publication in the journal. Reviewers normally have one month to review the article.

Reviewing articles allows you to influence the quality of content in *Media Message*.

Reviewing Books for *Media Message*

Publishers are now beginning to send us books for review. This issue contains a review of *Organizing the School Library: A Canadian Handbook* by Marilyn Kogan and George Whalen. If you are interested in reviewing books, please write and let us know the areas of your interest. A book review is normally required one month after the book is sent to the reviewer. As a gesture of thanks, the reviewer may retain the copy of the work reviewed.



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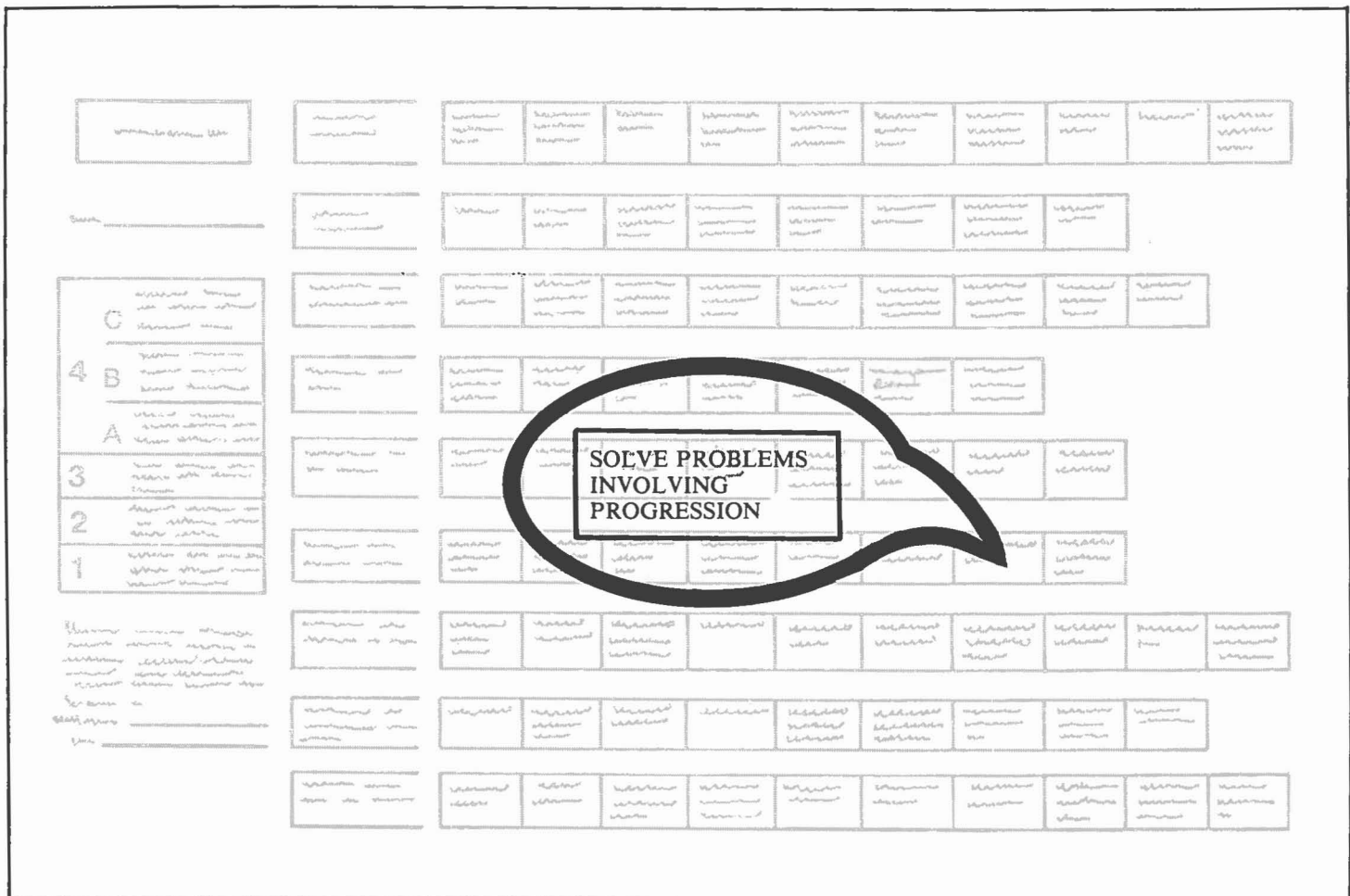
The Use of Audio Cassette Worksheets In Individualized Math Instruction

Arthur E. Shears

Holland College is doing some interesting work in the development of an individualized learning program in secondary mathematics. Learning activity packages were prepared and have been in use for several years at the post-secondary level of the college. More recently, a co-operative pilot project between the Prince Edward Island Department of Education and Holland College has developed materials and procedures for the secondary level.

Using a skill chart developed through the DACUM method, both printed resources and audiovisual resources have been pro-

Figure 1



duced for the vocational high school program in mathematics. During the past year these materials have been introduced into one centre of the college on a pilot basis so that a number of students at the Grade 10 level worked with individualized materials during their regular school mathematics periods. For the most part these students had no "traditional" math teaching during this year, instead they worked at completing the packages corresponding to the grade level skills identified on their chart. Figure 1 shows a section of the mathematics chart.

Audiovisual resources are an important part of this project and this paper will look at one particular audiovisual item — the audiotape/worksheet.

The development of the audio cassette/worksheets was in response to a need expressed by the mathematics instructors involved in the project. They realized that students should have a variety of learning resources associated with their learning activity package. Cost was a factor in the media selection decision as was the availability of equipment. Since the mathematics department had access to a relatively large number of cassette playback units, and regular 8½" x 11" sheets were easily laminated, audio cassette/worksheets seemed a good choice. Because the instructors had some familiarity with film strip/cassette programs in mathematics, they readily accepted the idea of a combined audio and visual approach.

Development Process

The audiovisual department was able to get a start on selecting topics for preparation by referring to the mathematics chart and consulting with the math instructors. A sample program was prepared, reviewed by several instructors and after suggestions for improvement were adopted it received their approval. The basic elements of these programs are shown in Figure 2. These include:

- 1) A description of what is to be learned.
- 2) A review of the subskills necessary.
- 3) A presentation of information.

- 4) Feedback to students on their performance.

Several techniques were used to enhance learning from the materials produced. These included:

- 1) Rest breaks so that information could be digested.
- 2) Music to indicate different sections in the learning package.
- 3) Graphic devices, where appropriate, to highlight important statements, equations, etc. on the work sheets.
- 4) A progression from simple to complex problems.

- 5) The use of audio to direct and assist the learner in understanding the concept presented on the printed page.
- 6) Active participation (both overt and covert) by the student.

Using the principles just explained, work began on an initial set of tapes. The topics given priority were those that would come up at the beginning of the school year. Two learning material developers began work using content outlines provided by the math instructors.

Often, more than one cassette/worksheet was needed for a particular skill. For exam-

Figure 2	
CASSETTE TAPE NO. X5 (Refers to a Skill No. on the Math Dacum Chart.)	
STATEMENT OF CONTENT	A sentence describing the content of the tape.
INTRODUCTION	Information on how to use the unit, and miscellaneous motivational information.
BACKGROUND	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of background information. 2. Question and require learner to respond on this information.
EXPLANATION AND APPLICATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Step-by-step illustration (worked example) and explanation (audio). 2. Step-by-step illustration (worked example) but with questions and responses required. 3. Sample problems to be attempted (answers provided on an additional sheet). 4. More complex problems <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Notify students of additional skill required. b) Worked example and summary explanation. c) Sample problems to be attempted (feedback provided on answer sheet).
REFER LEARNER BACK TO LEARNING PACKAGE	
CLOSING	

A Letter from Fredericton

G. Robert McNutt



DR. RICHARD LEWIS
EDITOR, MEDIA MESSAGE
ATLANTIC INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
5244 SOUTH. ST.
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA
B3J 1A4

I'm sitting at my desk attempting to come to grips with the dreaded time-to-update-that-lecture monster.

The problem, aside from my usual wide range of avoidance behaviour techniques, is the sheer confusion of it all. I'm surrounded by great piles of paper in that tattletale shade of grey that I've gleaned from here and there in the sacred name of research.

"Meet your competition", "TV and kids: What teachers are complaining about", "TV and kids: What can you do", "The first curriculum: Comparing school and television", "Video valhalla and open education", "School and parent participation through TV workshops", "A practical

guide to viewing skills", "Learning violence via TV", "Television and its effects on children", "TV: The effective 'aide' for affective education", "Television takes a turn at essential learning skills", "How TV taught Columbus, Ohio... a lesson or two" and "Today's lesson, class is Starsky and Hutch."

All of this material is full of up-to-date, state-of-the-art, mainstream jargon that, even if I ignore the shock of so many colons in one place, tells me only one thing. It tells me that somebody out there in journal-land is looking at television and its impact on my world of family, school and university. The fact that so much has been published, let

me curl my tongue around that talisman word so beloved by academic administrators yet again, 'published', since I bought my car, gives me pause.

I take some comfort in the supportive notion that I'm not the only one concerned. There really are others who feel that TV is having an effect. (Effect, my Partridge Family — it's changing the world on me!) I take some comfort in finding additional support with which to confront my colleague who doesn't own a set and claims that TV has no effect on youngsters. I take some comfort in finding that some of the authors of these articles do enjoy the mysterious beauty of a well constructed

sentence, a well turned paragraph and a beginning middle and end in the proper order. I can take no comfort in the results of my efforts.

I've read all of this and nothing has happened. I still don't know what I can do about, with, or against broadcast television that makes any sense. As a matter of disturbing fact, the idea that I thought I could find fast-fast-fast relief from the heartbreak of uncertainty just by reading some new improved product makes me wonder if it's too late. Have I been conditioned by the pitchman in the corner, that salesman with both feet in my mind?

I'm going to look more closely at six selections, find some new improved quotations and see if you will judge this as palatable as an article made right from scratch. Let's get cracking.

Three aspects of my reading hit me right away. First, the list of sources is far too small a sample for any solid academic conclusions and does not deal with books at all. (I would have done a computer search and strained my eyes on the microform reader but I wanted to watch some TV. The spectacle of John Boy Walton as a German soldier on a quiet western front in WWI intrigues me. "Off the mountain and into the mud," or "How come all the other Germans have accents?"). And then he had the nerve to come back to life after the credits and refer me to a book or two. Still, it was recommended by the NEA, so I can count it as research for this.)

Second, why are so many articles of my limited sample written by women? The image of woman on TV is less than literate, let alone flattering. Where do they find the time to write when they're supposed to be dealing with ring-around-the-collar? Can rice that's ready in five minutes save them that much time?

Third, the bulk of the material can be divided into two camps. One presents the view that teachers had better accept commercial TV and use it to out-think students: the "if you can't beat them anymore, then

pander to their taste" stance. The opposing camp (I almost said 'network') promotes the view that to accept commercial TV as a valid part of a school experience is to welcome the wolf into the fold: the "feeding them Alpo is not preparing them with the basics" stance. Wasn't it Milton who spoke of hungry sheep looking up and not being fed? But I digress. . .

In many ways the most interesting difference of opinion in these articles concerns commercials. Conventional wisdom holds that they are better produced than the programs, that they are masterworks of communication skills, that they are paramount role models for our lifestyles and that they contribute to a general lessening of the attention span. Some articles simply ignore them or dismiss them as junk and assume they have no impact on thinking organisms.

Certainly the newspapers present some startling statistics. We are told that preschoolers watch something like 20,000 commercials a year. The ABC network is reported as announcing a reduction in advertising aimed at children by twenty percent by January 1981. That translates as a change from eight and a half minutes of hardsell per hour on Saturday morning to only six and a half minutes. The president of ABC is quoted as saying: "We believe this is a significant step in providing the best program service for our young viewers." One wonders what will happen to these young viewers when they grow into prime time when they get eight minutes an hour. Isn't the Canadian figure twelve minutes? Almost as an aside, the clipping (for which I have no source) mentions that a Boston study found that nearly sixty percent of the ads aimed at children are for products that conflict with U.S. government dietary recommendations. All those hungry sheep are looking up again. But I digress. . . onward to the six selected articles.

As a general position paper "TV and kids: what teachers are complaining about" (Larrick, 1979) is a good start. Reporting on an American survey of teacher concerns

about TV viewing by their students, she has arrived at a universal character sketch of the TV offspring. Her list says they are exhausted from watching late, they have shorter attention spans, stunted imaginations and a "me first" attitude. The list describes them as expecting to be entertained, unwilling to search for words beyond the "you know" level of expression and devoted to body language and verbal putdowns.

While this produces a most unappealing picture of our children (reinforced by unscientific cocktail party chatter with other confused adults in N.B.) there are three particular conclusions she draws from the survey which are of the bring-tears-to-your-eyes-because-you-recognize-the-kid variety.

She states that a shorter attention span is a direct result of the recent human experience with TV producing a generation for whom persistence is a lost art. "It is as if each child expects immediate gratification — instant success, instant perfection — and will take nothing less" (Larrick, 1979).

If this is at all a valid result of TV, and in particular TV advertising for instant everything, then personkind has a major problem. Consider the implications for education, the arts and the instant atomic solution of an annoying headache caused by opposition troop movements: the Afghan Anacin Headache Number 236.

A second heartwrenching finding is her claim (also reinforced by local cocktail party chatter) that children are coming to school with little exposure to nursery rhymes and very little play experience. Watching TV is now listed as a hobby by kids! "In all communities and at all economic levels, television is the activity children choose after school" (Larrick, 1979).

The third is her concern that TV reinforces isolation, the TV is watched by increasing numbers of people on a solitary basis, even if there are others in the room. What a culture shock from the traditional

school setting! "...for many children, television is the only sure companion in the home — the one who greets them after school, the one who says goodnight and the one who sends them off to school in the morning — TV is the third (often the second) parent" (Larrick, 1979).

The reader's reaction to this general position paper is to rush out immediately and save the kids from the big bad TV. But let's look at a couple of other articles before we go and kick sand in the bully's tuner.

"Television's effect on reading: A case study" (Busch, 1978) is a specific look at one area of TV consumption. The article deals with a replication of a study done in 1961 by Wilber Schramm. The 1978 report more or less confirms the 1961 findings. But before you settle back in relief at the implication that the TV world has not changed after all, let's look at some conclusions drawn from the project.

Both studies found that TV viewing has a positive effect on the level of reading skills for pre-school and primary children, particularly in the clear area of exposure to vocabulary ideas. Great! At last a good thing about TV and kids. The study, however goes on...

By the age range of 10-12 years a kind of saturation point is reached and the kids watching TV can be separated into those who watch a lot and those who watch only a little. Heavy viewing, often defined as six hours a day and up, is strongly related to poor performance in a great number of school task areas. This is especially true in reading for content, let alone reading for pleasure. Lighter viewing, for whatever reasons, is strongly related to what we traditionally call success.

Thus, by grade 6, when the study suggests that what little parental supervision has existed is removed, we have evolved a two-tier system of success that begins to look like a rigid class structure. The studies suggest that low ability students stick with their friendly neighborhood TV set longer than do high ability students and they tend

to believe it more.

One assumes that by that age, a kid realizes he/she has a problem with success based on reading and, being human, turns from failure to success — the experience of watching television. If you accept the theory that our basic achievement tests are loaded against the individual who gets 95% of his information through non-print media, then the class distinction comes into sharper focus, particularly in view of the general level of TV entertainment and the low audience ratings of news, documentaries and public affairs shows. I don't know what to do about this information, but the political implications are enormous by themselves.

The two studies reported on attention span problems. They suggest a marked lack of patience in doing anything that requires time, study or sustained effort. Both studies also reported that kids watch, or rather say they watch, TV for fantasy and relaxation, not primarily for information. Care to think about role models in soap ads?

In short, this article strongly suggests that TV watching continues the process of producing what the author calls a "shallow, common-denominator audience."

A more helpful note is sounded by Tierney (1978) in an initial report on a study done in Montreal and Windsor in the late winter of 1978.

She finds that 95% of Canadians watch non-Canadian TV shows. (One is moved to wonder how much it cost to find that out. One is further moved to wonder what percentage of Canadians are blind, but I digress...)

From answers to a questionnaire she finds a number of interesting differences in viewing habits and related social values among language and ethnic groups. She also finds that what parents will watch, children will view and that Canadian adolescents usually select TV programs that support their family value system. (I look forward to reading a lot more research on the implications of those findings.)

The most interesting suggestion she draws from the results of the survey is that the TV is "the most important link created to bridge the generations." Programs provide a neutral opportunity for parents and children to discuss hot issues which neither side wants to raise with the other, because of the threatening possibilities of direct conflict. The two programs considered most successful for this process were "Eight is Enough" and "All in the Family." (The implications of this concept and the elusive Canadian identity take the mind well beyond the boggle stage.)

The study found that, whether the individual had had them or not, communication and shared activity were the two most sought after values on the list of adolescents and pre-adolescents regarding parents. Communication and shared activity, even if only TV viewing, were seen as the most desirable thing a parent could do for a child — a most revealing comment on our consumer society. Clearly TV is not the only wasteland about us.

Resisting the urge to rush home, take away their toys and force the kids to watch TV with me, let me look at something with a more direct connection to the problem.

Linda Kahn (1979), an employee of the Prime Time School Television agency writes on "TV and kids: What can you do."

The article, like a sign "Do Not Crash This Aircraft" on the instrument panel of a DC-10 is only vaguely useful. It is a series of suggestions for classroom teachers aimed at using commercial programmes with their classes. Many of her suggestions rub me the wrong way. Her example of a discussion based on the pros and cons of being a superhero (they have difficulty forming lasting personal relationships because of the need to protect their secret identity) seems distinctly less useful than her suggestions for map work with "Little House On The Prairie." If nothing else, at least that programme has a left-handed hero with whom the kids by the window can identify.

While it is tempting to dismiss her ap-

proach with jokes about a ubiquitous smiling rodent, we do need to remember that for many, many kids in our schools TV shows are not only *their* literature, but outside of school their *only* literature, even overpowering comic books. It is difficult not to be concerned with the reality behind her comment:

Whenever the set is on, the viewer is being influenced. Most of the time the effects are subtle: a phrase repeated, a character emulated. It is almost impossible for us to shield ourselves from TV, but it is not impossible for us to develop an awareness of how we are influenced by television. (Kahn, 1979)

The other side of the debate is neatly covered by Pines (1979). It's a pity that deadlines insure that the date of this article keeps it from being an answer to the Kahn comments.

Pines' concern is neatly summed up by a quotation from another article in the same issue: "...an insidious commercial mythology is slowly grinding our old values into dust." (Waley and Antonelli, 1979).

Pines documents her concern that there is a growing pressure from corporate sponsors and networks to influence teacher groups towards using more TV in the classroom for the wrong reasons. The hidden agenda here is claimed to be a conferring of respectability and an increased audience for the networks. You may have seen for yourself the ABC advertisement referring to the NEA effort in the United States that resulted in 20,000,000 students watching "Roots II."

The article points out that an industry has sprung up around the use of TV in classrooms. It lists the viewing guide in the AFT magazine, the "Teachers' Guide to Television" publication which covers only commercial TV not PBS, and the "Prime Time School Television" agency which seems more democratic; they do guides for any show they're paid to handle.

After viewing with alarm, the article settles on four acceptable reasons for joining

the parade and discusses each in detail. The article is worth reading for those thoughts alone. I'll just list the headings she follows:

1. to teach the subject that is dramatized (documentaries)
2. to motivate students to learn something else (legal code)
3. to change attitudes (the one thing that TV does best)
4. to teach viewing skills (a most fashionable idea)

The response to this approach given by an unnamed teacher quoted in this article is well worth pondering. "There's not enough time in the school day to cover the things the schools are supposed to cover. Should we turn our schools into places where we end up talking about what we saw on TV the previous night?" (Pines, 1979)

The article raises some of the problems inherent in the docu-drama format with a

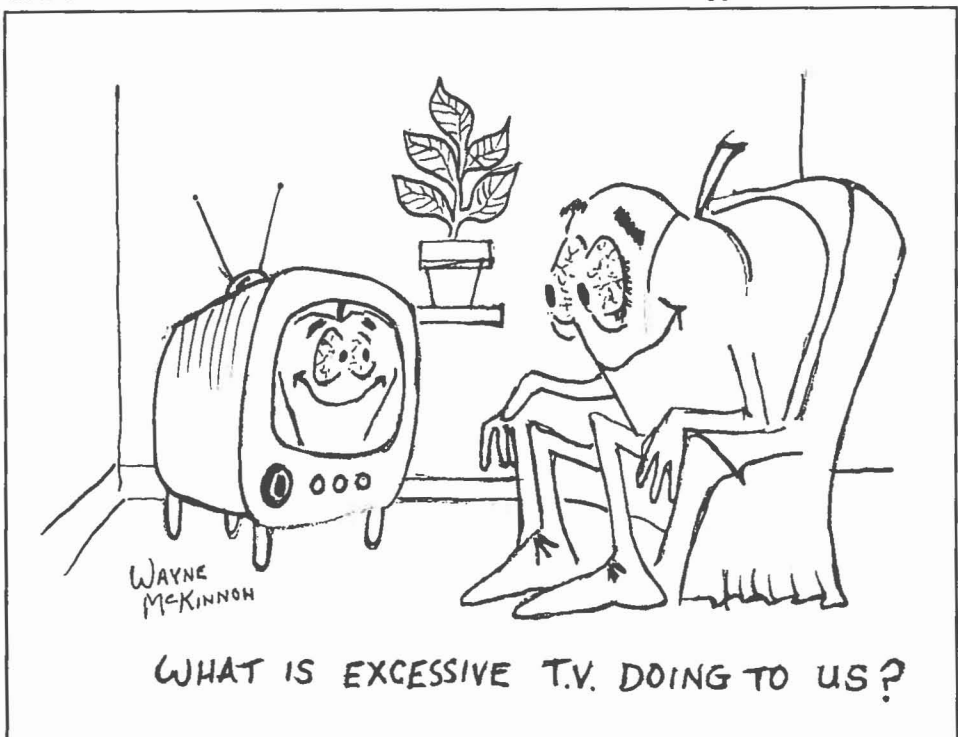
number of current references. On another track, she suggests shows that reveal the special effects tricks available to TV might be useful in helping kids from leaping off tall buildings or swallowing commercials whole.

Briefly then, the author is deeply concerned that the bandwagon is getting too crowded, too fast, but she can see some valid reasons for hitching a ride to a specific destination.

Remember yesterday? That's about ten years ago. Remember a book called *Teaching as a subversive activity?* Sure you do! With delight, right?

Well now it's today and Neil Postman has become a professor of education at New York University. His new book is called "Teaching as a conserving activity". There's a story or two there, don't you think?

The *Phi Delta Kappan* for November



1979 extracts the first chapter. It's called the "The first curriculum: Comparing school and television". If the rest of the book lives up to the sample, then we really do have one of those rare MUST READ situations.

The chapter is an analysis of TV and the school system that produces an interesting mindset: "broadcast TV fulfills all the requirements of a curriculum...it is a total learning system with its own organizing ways of dealing with time, space, numbers, learning processes, techniques, subjects, styles, etc" (Postman, 1979).

Having established his point of view, Postman gives us the now familiar usage figures arriving at the usual statistic of kids getting more than twice as much exposure to the mass media as they get to school.

Perhaps less familiar is his material on the vast differences between the IMAGE and the WORD. This gets reasonably heavy and needs to be read, rather than paraphrased in a review. His conclusion is that with TV you "see" and with school you process words. While this idea is not original with Postman by any means, he states the case convincingly and it is obvious that he has done his homework in detail.

So much of this chapter is worth quotation marks that it is impossible for me to refrain from quoting at length. I'll compromise and list three useful bits and then move along.

1. Unlike the school which selects its subject matter first and then tries to devise methods to attract interest in it, television first selects ways to attract interest and allows content to be shaped accordingly...in the TV curriculum, if the student repeatedly does not pay attention, the teacher is removed from class (Postman, 1979).

2. It comes down to this: because the school curriculum's primary form of information is language, its style of teaching is expository...it concerns itself with facts and arguments...Television's primary form

of information is the image; its style of teaching is narration...one responds by accepting or rejecting on emotional grounds. TV teaches you to know through what you see and feel (Postman, 1979).

3. Perhaps the most powerful bias of TV is its emphasis on immediate gratification, for TV has no need to put its learners on 'hold' with a view toward later intellectual or emotional satisfaction. TV does not require you to remember anything...it has achieved learning for its own sake. Attending to it is its own reward (Postman, 1979).

Some food for thought in those three brief messages.

When Postman turns his attention to TV advertising, he deals with a crucial area. I agree with his awareness that the individual product is not the point of concern. Commercials are really about social attitudes, they teach by parable that all serious, and not-so-serious, human problems can be instantly solved by simple, easy and convenient means. It is only necessary to buy 'it' to achieve instant success. There's no more need to study, to work, to try to be nice or to exercise moral choice to find the lesser of several evils. We need only make an equivalent choice between "regular economy" and "super-effective giant-economy" and this decision need only be based on available shelf space.

If TV is all that Postman claims as a first curriculum for the kids, then we may be wasting our time shouting in the wilderness — it may already be too late for "them," and where does that leave "Us?"

Where indeed?

Well, if nothing else, it leaves me in the same state I was in when I began writing this letter: amused, confused and unprepared for the future in general and that upcoming lecture in particular.

Regards,
Bob

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In the dark days before student loans, G. Robert McNutt worked his way through university by working at a radio station. This led to more years of experience than he likes to admit in drama, teaching, small format TV production and related media hobbies. He holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Educational Technology (CNA) earned in England. At present he is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education on the Fredericton campus of the University of New Brunswick.

Reviews

Diane Worsley

Kogon, Marilyn H. and George Whalen. *Organizing the School Library: A Canadian Handbook*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1980. xviii, 268 p. ISBN 0-07-077833-7.

Organizing the School Library: A Canadian Handbook as stated by the authors is a reference tool for practicing school librarians. The Preface clearly states the intent of the book as a handbook on school library organization; lists the principal sources upon which it is based; discusses the depth of treatment various subjects receive; and notes the standards for terminology used.

Initially, I had expected more discussion of automated systems and networks: my expectations were based on the Foreword and Preface, and I was disappointed that UTLAS, as an example, was mentioned only in passing and slight mentioned was given to PRECIS. However, I admit that my expectations were unrealistic, and reality is "where this book is at." The authors describe the technical services which are needed to maintain the school library with the resources available, and suggest options to solve problems by which the "average" school librarian is beset.

The *Handbook* progresses chronologically through acquisition (selection tools, sources, ordering, budgets, invoices); cataloguing (alternatives to original cataloguing); citing and explaining the rules of AACR2 (main entry and description); assigning subject headings and classification; the completion and typing of the card set; maintaining bibliographic files (manual and automated); processing and shelving (print and non-print); circulation procedures (manual and automated); and upkeep of the collection. The last chapter very briefly discusses how to handle French language materials and provides a list of reference sources.

The Table of Contents lists not only the chapter title but also the principal topics found therein. The "contents" at the beginning of each chapter provides further subdivisions of the topics. Cross-references to other pages are made as the occasion demands. A glossary listing technical terms appears after the main text. Definitions are original for the most part; quoted sources of definitions are indicated. An index completes the book.

As indicated in the Preface, treatment of

topics varies in depth: the authors offer a condensed version of AACR2 in approximately 90 pages. Other chapters warrant approximately 10 to 20 pages each. In summarizing AACR2 for main entry headings and description of the work, the authors bring related rules together, simplifying and explaining, and omit those which would not have application to schools. Terminology used in AACR1 and AACR2 is differentiated, and exceptions to the new rules are cited (e.g. "AACR2 uses 'Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,' but the Library of Congress and the National Library of Canada prefer 'Soviet Union.'")

One of the prime advantages of the book is that it is Canadian: Canadian exceptions to rules, Canadian sources of information and materials, how to handle Canadians can all be found here.

I think the authors ought to have defined "school librarian" or "school media specialist" more concisely. My definition would include those who had specialized in this area as part of their teacher training or those who were graduates of library schools with teaching qualifications; yet, I wonder if this is the authors' definition. The content of the book seems more useful to students intending to become school librarians and is most definitely valuable to the teacher without training in school librarianship who is assigned "to look after" the library. For the professional teacher librarian who has the primary sources available, and who maintains an awareness of current developments, it will be of limited value.

Physically, the book is well organized and very easy to use. The authors have provided clear examples and illustrations. Bold face headings assist the reader throughout. One criticism which I have is directed to the publisher. As this title is obviously intended to serve as a reference book, why is the binding substandard? In my review copy, the endpapers had torn at the spine, and the blue ink on the cover rubbed off on hands and clothing.

Diane Worsley is a native of Saskatchewan who received her B.A. from the University of Saskatchewan and her B.Ed. from the University of Regina. She is currently the Curriculum Resources Bibliographer with the Department of Education in Regina.

Guidelines for Authors

Media Message accepts papers dealing with the field of educational technology and learning: computer assisted instruction, learning resources centres, communication, evaluation, instructional design, simulation, gaming, and other aspects of the use of technology in the learning process.

Manuscripts should be typed on 8½ x 11 paper. All material must be double spaced. Include a title page stating title, full names of authors, identification of each author (position and institutional or other affiliation), and mailing addresses including postal codes for each author. References should be prepared according to the style suggested in the Publications Manual of the American Psychological Association.

Two typed copies of each paper should be submitted. Visual and graphic material is welcomed, however, it must be of a good technical quality.

The *Newsletter* features a column called "Viewpoint" which focusses on a person or an issue. Items announcing conferences or other activities and publications of interest to members are welcome.

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