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ABSTRACT

This booklet is intended for classroom teachers who would like to teach reading within the context of television. Most of the activities presented in this booklet pertain directly to reading, but other aspects of a language arts program (listening, speaking, and writing) are also given some attention. The activities are designed to serve as a series of starting points toward improved reading skills. Only the television programs which the child watches at home are dealt with. The contents include: "How to Get Started," which encourages teachers to watch television themselves to determine how various programs could be related to reading instruction, identify those television programs which could be considered of good quality, and survey the students to determine their favorite television programs; and "How to Use Television to Improve Instruction," which presents techniques for using television to improve the student's listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. (WR)

Reading Aids Series

TELEVISION and the CLASSROOM READING PROGRAM

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em

George J. Becker
San Diego State University

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The International Reading Association attempts, through its publications, to provide a forum for a wide spectrum of opinion on reading. This policy permits divergent viewpoints without assuming the endorsement of the Association.

About This Booklet

This booklet is written for classroom teachers who would like to teach reading more effectively by presenting it within a context that is relevant and interesting for students.

Did you know that today's typical student spends about three hours a day watching television? This means that during a regular school week he spends almost as much time watching television as he does in the classroom. And when you take into account holidays, vacations, and time lost from school because of illness, you realize that today's student actually spends more time in the course of a year watching television than he spends in the classroom. Some educators are appalled at the amount of time students devote to television, but it appears certain that, like it or not, television is here to stay and that there is little they can do to discourage students from spending their time in this way.

What can be done? There's an old political adage which states, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em." Television offers an ideal bridge between the school world and that other world of outside activity which students often find so much more exciting and stimulating. Two currently popular educational injunctions are relevant in

this regard. The first of these injunctions is: "Start where the child is." For the many children who watch television this represents an ideal starting place. The second injunction is: "Proceed from the known to the unknown." For the average student of today television obviously represents a very well-known commodity.

Most of the activities presented in this booklet pertain directly to reading, but other aspects of a language arts program (listening, speaking, and writing) are also given some attention because of their inextricably close relationship to reading. Many of the ideas presented were suggested by successful teachers in the field; all of the techniques have been successfully used in a classroom situation. The activities are not designed to replace a comprehensive, sequential, structured reading program but rather to serve as a series of starting points to achieve this objective ultimately. Even for those teachers who are currently succeeding in making reading interesting and relevant for their students, there should be many practical suggestions.

This booklet deals solely with television programs which the student watches at home. No attempt has been made to deal directly with closed-circuit television or with educational and commercial television programs viewed in the classroom. Many of the suggestions offered here, however, could be adapted to these conditions. The activities presented in this booklet concentrate for the most part on the elementary school level, although some of them can be used with or adapted to junior and senior high school students. Various television programs which do an excellent job of teaching formal aspects of reading—such as *Sesame Street, Electric Company, Grammar Rock*—are not dealt with directly in this booklet. Obviously, however, you will want to call such programs to the attention of your students and their parents.

How to Get Started

WATCH TELEVISION YOURSELF

It is especially important to watch your students' favorite television programs. Watch these programs actively, taking notes if it helps, always asking yourself the question: How can I tie in what I'm seeing with my reading and language arts program?

Whenever possible use television names, words, and situations to give examples and illustrations in class of any aspect of reading you might be teaching. Even the world of television commercials offers unlimited scope. For instance, if you're introducing contractions or planning to reinforce your teaching in this area, the currently popular television commercials "You *can't* fool Mother Nature" and "*It's* the real thing" provide two good examples. The concepts of rhythm, meter, and rhyme can be illustrated with catchy jingles such as

> There's a whole new generation
> Coming at you, coming strong—
> Put yourself behind a Pepsi,
> If you're living, you belong.
> You've got a lot to live,
> And Pepsi's got a lot to give.

In a beginning phonics program, "Put *spice* in your *life*"

could be used to show that the letter *e* at the end of a one syllable word is usually silent and that the main vowel in such a word usually has a "long" quality. Or, "You can trust your *car* to the man who wears the *star*," can illustrate the fact that a vowel preceding the letter *r* has neither a short nor a long quality but a distinctive sound of its own.

ENCOURAGE YOUR STUDENTS TO WATCH GOOD TELEVISION PROGRAMS

While there are some television programs which are good and at least a few which are outstanding, there are many of mediocre quality or worse. Even the poorest television program, however, acquires some value when an imaginative teacher utilizes it to make reading more exciting for her students. Frequently the poor programs serve as a starting place for the development of taste and a gradual introduction to programs of progressively higher quality.

Preview the week's programs by reading the television section of the Sunday newspaper or by going through *TV Guide* or some publication of a similar nature. There is an excellent publication called *Teachers Guides to Television* which is published twice a year. The first issue deals with the opening half of the school year and the second issue deals with the remaining half. Each issue presents detailed previews of about fifteen quality programs. For each of the previewed programs there are suggested activities for the teacher to use both before and after viewing, plus a section devoted to learning resources. This latter section consists of a related films list for each of the programs and a bibliography listing appropriate related reading material. The cost for an annual subscription is $3.50 ($3.00 if four or more subscriptions are mailed to the same address) and is available from Teachers Guides to Television, Box 564, Lenox Hall Station, New York, New York 10021.

Another very good publication is *Television Most Worth Watching*. This is a four-page bulletin sent on a weekly basis from September through June. It is edited by a former school teacher and contains listings plus short previews of programs judged to be of special value for the forthcoming week. Some programs are local for the Chicago area, channels are numbered for the Chicago area, and times are given in terms of Central Time; nevertheless, most of the programs listed are shown on national networks and the slight adjustments required to use the guide are well worth the effort. The publication costs $10 for each subscription ($5 each if ten or more are sent to the same address), and is available from Television Most Worth Watching, 3245 Wisconsin Avenue, Berwyn, Illinois 60402.

Every school should have at least one subscription to each of the two publications just mentioned and copies should be available in the Faculty Lounge.

Make a list of the programs which seem promising and give your best sales pitch for these programs shortly before dismissal on the day they are being shown. Devote the last period each Friday to a television program discussion period with the last fifteen minutes of this period spent on television previews for the weekend. Occasionally send a note home to parents calling their attention to shows of special value and asking their cooperation in encouraging their youngsters to watch them. Such a note might read like this.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Johnson,

On Sunday, October 15, at 9 PM, Channel 8 will be presenting a 90-minute program on the life of Leonardo da Vinci entitled *A Genius for All Seasons*. This is the first of a five-part series which won the Grand Prize at the 1972 Monte Carlo International Television Festival. In addition to being an excellent television series, the material ties in directly with our current Social Studies unit which deals with this period of history. Peter is very much interested in

this topic and he was chairman of a group of students who recently gave an outstanding report in class on the early part of this period.

I would appreciate it very much, therefore, if you would try to arrange your family schedule so that Peter is free to spend this 90-minute period watching this television program. It would also be of great help if you would remind Peter of the program on Sunday night and make sure that the television set is available to him.

Thank you very much for your cooperation. I will keep you informed of the dates for the remaining four parts of this series.

Sincerely,
Evelyn Stroud

When parents ask "How can I help my child in reading?" have a list of quality television programs available to offer them along with your other suggestions. Encourage students, parents, neighbors, and fellow teachers to write to the television networks expressing approval of outstanding shows, criticizing poor shows, and making suggestions for the kinds of shows they would prefer. Highly rated programs such as *Sesame Street, Electric Company* and *Grammar Rock*, deserve special attention. Books, kits, and other commercially prepared supplements to these programs make fine additions to the classroom reading program, and you can frequently create informal games, puzzles, and other projects which are based on the programs and are correlated with subject matter currently being taught.

FIND OUT WHICH TELEVISION PROGRAMS YOUR STUDENTS WATCH

It would be of little practical value for you as a classroom teacher to know the results of a national television preference survey or perhaps even to know the results of a survey from the same grade in a different part of your city. Television programs and student preferences change rapidly. Programing and time differences

have their effects on television watching causing a program which is popular in one part of the country to be unavailable or presented at an inconvenient time in another location. Differences in socioeconomic status, intelligence, maturity, and general background are all also related to differences in the television preferences of students.

Similarly, it would be hazardous for the average teacher to assume that she is aware of the television watching preferences of her students. The experience of the past several years has convinced me that, in general, teachers are not aware of which television programs their students like best.

In view of these facts, your most practical recourse is to conduct a television preference survey (see Figure 1) in your own classroom at the beginning of the school year and perhaps again at the start of the second semester.

Figure 1. Television Preference Survey

Grade_____ Name_____

TELEVISION PREFERENCE SURVEY

List your three favorite television programs in order of preference:

1. _____

2. _____

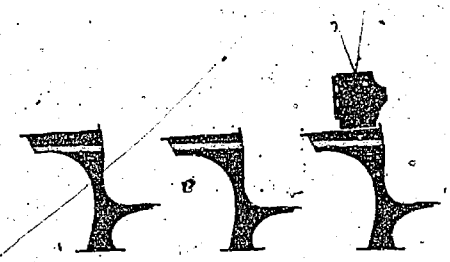
3. _____

Ask the students in your class to list, in order of preference, their three favorite television programs. If they have been given advance notice of the survey at the

start of the period they should be able to write out their three choices toward the end of the period in only a few minutes. Too much advance notice would give the students a chance to discuss the project among themselves at recess or at lunch time and perhaps bias the results. For kindergarten and lower primary grades it will be necessary to conduct the television preference survey orally on an individual basis. When dealing with older students you might want to add to the bottom of the questionnaire such questions as: What do you especially like about your favorite program? Which character do you like best? For tabulating the data, assign three points for every first place choice, two points for every second place choice, and one point for every third place choice. Add up the totals and you will have a good idea of the comparative popularity of the programs your students watch in addition to a listing of all their favorite programs.

The results of the survey can be shown to the students and used as the basis of a discussion of individual differences, interests, and tastes. Try to arrange to exchange the results of your television survey with results obtained at the same grade level in another part of the city, another city, another state, or even another country to develop further your discussion of interests and tastes.

The television programs which are the current class favorites will of course occupy most of your teaching time. In addition, such information can serve as the basis for occasional grouping of students for some of the projects and activities to be described later. It's a good practice to keep a list of the favorite television programs of all your students, as well as their other interests and hobbies. It happens sometimes that a student who is turned off to other approaches to reading will be interested in an unusual or specialized kind of television show—information which can sometimes provide a teacher with a successful opening wedge.



How to Use Television to Improve Instruction

Here are several simple yet effective techniques for using television to improve your teaching. Included are methods involving listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

LISTENING

1. Encourage your students (especially bilingual and/or culturally disadvantaged students) to listen carefully to the spoken word on television programs. Reinforce their listening by speaking some of the words or phrases they are likely to have heard; give the students practice in repeating and in speaking these words and phrases themselves; try to incorporate some of these words into their beginning reading and writing activities.

A teacher at the primary level might ask at the beginning of the term, "When Buffy got lost what did she say to the policeman?" and then provide three answers, one of which is correct. When the correct answer is given the students are asked to repeat it and then to see which of them can best match Buffy's expression. As the term progresses the students are encouraged to supply the correct answers themselves and the required correct responses are gradually lengthened.

2. Assign students or committees to listen for dialects and regional accents. Have them imitate these dialects and accents in class to show that people express themselves differently in different parts of the country. The use of slang, colloquialisms, and grammatical mistakes could be treated in the same way.

Here is a list of slang expressions used in a recent *Room 222* program:

Does anyone know what the Boston massacre was?

It was a bummer—New York 35, Boston 0.

I do my thing, man.

That's a *drag*.

Don't get all *bent out of shape* about it.

It gave the colonists real arguments for *splitting up* with England.

Some of the history books say that Sam Adams was a rabble-rouser, *jivin'* the people of Boston.

Exercises such as these make a fine introduction to the English language as a changing, evolving entity; they can also be helpful in discussing "standard English." Another group of students could be urged to listen for metaphorical or figurative expressions (she was "taken to the cleaners"). When examples of figurative language are discussed and explained in class and lists of such expressions are compiled, students are sensitized to this area and are given confidence to ask questions in class when difficulties in meaning occur in this sphere.

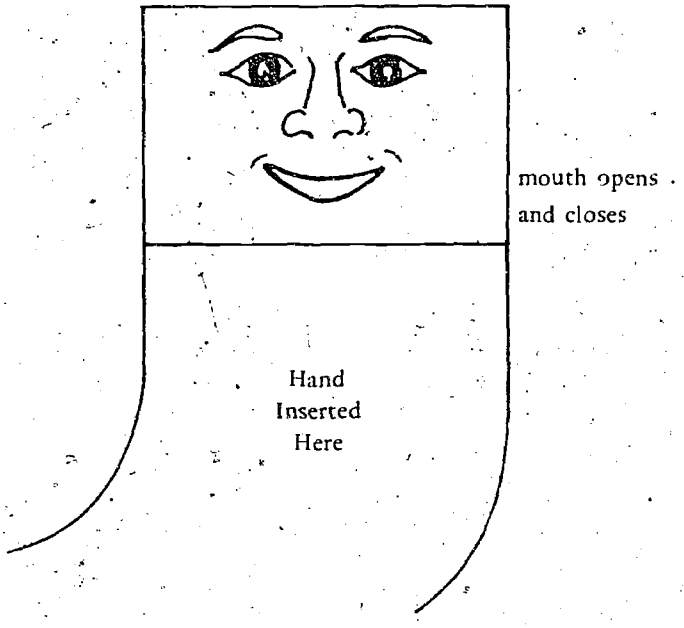
3. Once in a while television announcers or actors make mistakes concerning locations of places, dates, traveling time between cities, and so on. Sportscasters, sometimes relying on their memories instead of on record books, will occasionally give the wrong place or date of birth, college attended, batting average, and other facts about players. If a student thinks he has uncovered a mistake, have him mention it in the class television discussion period. Tell him, if he doesn't

know, where he can check the true facts and have him report back to the class the following week. If it really were a mistake, have the student write a letter to the person who made the error, call it to his attention in a tactful way, and see what happens.

SPEAKING

1. Have a portion of your Show-and-Tell or sharing period devoted to television sharing so that your students can describe to the rest of the class interesting programs they have seen. For kindergarten or beginning primary grades, make a puppet with eyes, nose, and a mouth that opens and closes. Imprint these features on a face in the form of a television screen (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Telvie Puppet



Name the puppet *Telvie* and give the students a chance to let Telvie describe their favorite television show to the other boys and girls. This activity is especially good for bilingual youngsters, children with speech defects, or youngsters who find verbalization difficult for any reason. If necessary at the beginning allow the student to remain completely hidden so that only Telvie is visible to the rest of the class.

2. Get pictures of favorite television characters or draw cartoons of characters seen on television and show them in class as a stimulus for student verbalization.

For example, show your beginning students a picture of Dennis the Menace (clip it from the comics or draw it yourself and make the connection between the television show and the comic strip) with soiled new clothes and a mud puddle nearby. Ask the students what might have happened, and if necessary prompt them with such questions as: What do you think the mud puddle has to do with the picture? How do you think Dennis feels? What do you think might happen next?

3. Divide the class into teams of four or five students on each team. One of the teams secretly designates one of its members to represent a current favorite television character. Members of another team are allowed ten questions which are capable of being answered "yes" or "no" in order to try to determine the identity of the television character. If they have not determined his identity by the end of the ten questions or if they guess incorrectly, the other team reveals the identity of the character. You act as referee, and the team which asks the fewest questions and determines the most identities correctly is declared the winner.

4. Use role playing interviews in which one student plays the part of a television star and another student plays the part of a television interviewer. If possible, have the interviews tape-recorded for later playback and discussion. A variation of this technique is to have

students play the part of athletes who are being interviewed in pregame or postgame programs concerning make-believe heroics on the field.

The exact questions which the television interviewer asks would depend, of course, on the background of the person being interviewed but the following types of questions would usually be appropriate and helpful:

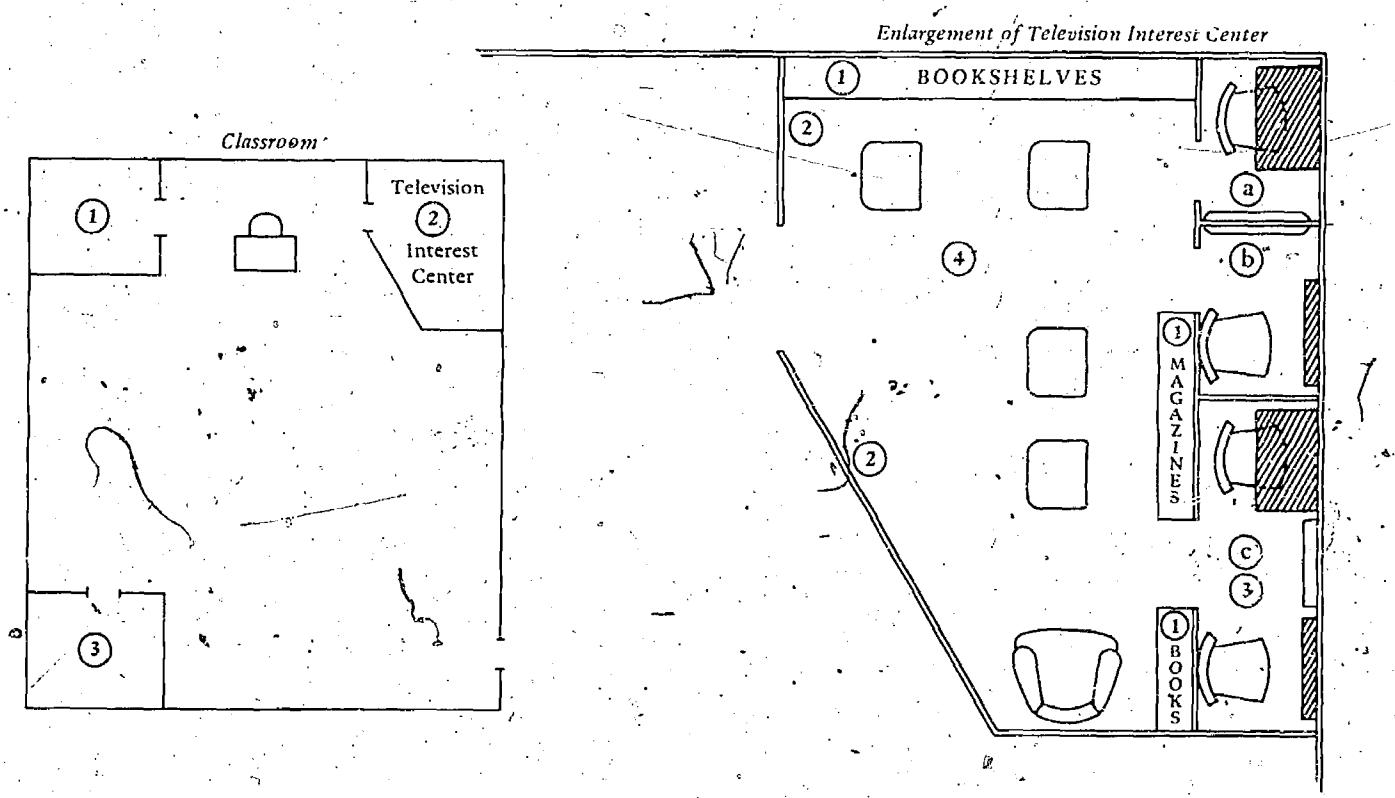
- How does it feel to be a television star?
- Could you tell us about some of the disadvantages of being a television star?
- What were some of the problems you had to deal with before you became famous?
- Do you have any advice or tips you'd like to give to today's students?

5. Adapt currently popular television games to your own classroom needs. *Password*, for instance, could be used at different levels to encourage vocabulary development along with verbalization. Television quiz programs such as *Truth or Consequences* and *College Bowl* supply a nice format once in a while for your classroom oral quiz. The consequences for not knowing the correct answer to some required classwork could sometimes be a referral to the correct source of information followed by later evidence of its having been learned. On other occasions the consequences could be strictly fun or stunt type activities (followed later by appropriate review and testing).

READING

1. Collect (and encourage students and parents to supply) books, magazines, articles, posters, and newspaper accounts of favorite television stars or programs and use this material in a television interest center in the classroom. Figure 3 (see page 18) shows how a classroom can be divided into three interest centers with the television interest center shown in greater detail.

Figure 3. Television Interest Center



1. *Game* and *Puzzle* Interest Center

2. *Television* Interest Center

3. *Sports* Interest Center

1. *Shelves for books about television*—book, magazine, and pamphlet racks

2. *Room dividers*—walls to serve as television bulletin boards

3. *Cubicles*

   a and *b* for one student each; *c* for two or three students; *shaded area* is flat writing surface which can be either flush against wall as in *b* or raised on supporting hinges for writing surface as in *a*.

4. *Open carpeted area* with chairs, cushions, and pillows

Space is available for bookshelves, book racks, and magazine racks. The room divider which separates the classroom from the television interest center is designed to serve as a bulletin board on the inside. Pictures of television stars, news clippings about stars and their programs, sketches of television characters, or plot outlines written by the students, are examples of appropriate bulletin board materials.

Cubicles are provided for students who prefer privacy or relative privacy (one of the cubicles is designed for two or three students). For students who would like to write, an improvised desk is available in the form of a flat writing surface. Normally this writing surface is flush against the wall, but when needed for writing purposes it can be raised on supporting hinges.

The central area of the television interest center is a carpeted open space which contains chairs, pillows, and cushions.

2. Be on the lookout for coloring books dealing with current television favorites. These books usually provide large pictures designed for coloring with crayons and include brief captions consisting of very simple words beneath the illustrations. Kindergarten and primary grade students can color the picture, tell about it, and read all or part of the caption. Representative of these books are the Saalfield Publishing Company series (Saalfield Square, Akron, Ohio 44301) including *The Partridge Family, Nanny and the Professor,* and *The Double Deckers,* costing 39 cents each; and the Whitman books (Western Publishing Company, 1220 Mound Avenue, Racine, Wisconsin 53404) including *Family Affair* and *Captain Kangaroo,* which cost 59 cents each.

3. Consider student television choices when recommending books and other reading material for the school library and for the local public library. For example, *The Partridge Family, Gentle Ben, Get Smart, Sesame Street,* and *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* all have

books and other printed follow-up material based on the television program.

4. Discuss your students' favorite television programs with the school or public librarian. She may be able to recommend and display related reading material of appropriate readability levels. Books might be grouped into sections of the library with a caption "If you like (name of currently popular science fiction show), try these (book jackets of appropriate science fiction books)." Classics (either the original or simplified versions) might be displayed with a caption relating them to current television favorites. For instance, *Swiss Family Robinson* might be displayed with a caption relating it to *Gilligan's Island*, a television rerun favorite about people marooned on a tropical island.

5. Sports books (available in paperback or magazine form) by retired athletes who have become known to students through television are becoming more prominent. Many of these make excellent reading material for students who are sports enthusiasts. A few examples for older students are Jerry Kramer's *Instant Replay*, Jim Bouton's *Ball Four*, and Johnny Sample's *Confessions of a Dirty Ballplayer*.

6. Newspaper accounts of All-Star Games, Games of the Week, or of any sporting event on television likely to be of interest to students, can be brought to class and used for reading on either a formal or informal basis.

7. Bring to class library editions of sporting books, read short selections to arouse interest, and tell students where the book is available in the library. Introduce the topic with a reference to a sports program which has recently been shown on television.

8. Encourage students to obtain paperbacks from educational book clubs, and put in a special plug for those paperbacks which are related in any way to favorite television programs or actors. Following is a list of some of these book clubs.

EDUCATIONAL PAPERBACK BOOK CLUBS

Publisher	Address	Name of Club	Grade Level
Scholastic Book Services	904 Sylvan Avenue Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632	See-Saw	K-1
	or	Lucky	2-3
	2931 E. McCarty Street Jefferson City, Missouri 65101	Arrow	4-6
	or	Tab	Jr. High
	5675 Sunol Boulevard Pleasanton, California 94566	Campus	Sr. High
Young Readers Press	Box 181 Northvale, New Jersey 07647	King Cole	K-1
		Willie Whale	2-3
		Falcon	4-6
Weekly Reader Paperback Book Clubs, American Education Publications	Education Center Columbus, Ohio 43216	Good Time Books	2-3
		Discovering Books	4-6

9. Obtain the lyrics of popular songs and give each student a copy. Use this material for group reading, choral reading, or simply as the basis for learning the lyrics of the song. The review of basic sight words will be valuable for those students who need it. Learning unusual or difficult words in a meaningful context will be interesting for those students who have the ability to

do so. And best of all it will show at least some students that reading can be fun—a fact which they may have previously grasped only dimly, or perhaps not at all.

10. Decorate worksheets with sketches of favorite television characters or with key expressions from favorite shows.

11. Use phonograph record jackets of popular songs heard on television as reading material. These jackets frequently contain interesting reading material dealing with lyrics, musical arrangements, performers, and other similar background data. The Partridge Family, Jackson Five, and Osmonds are currently especially popular with intermediate grade students but many students at the primary levels also list them among their favorites (perhaps some of them developed this liking when their older brothers or sisters controlled the only family television set and wouldn't let them watch anything else).

12. Occasionally select a topic which has been presented on a recent favorite television show. Have this issue discussed in class. Then read the class excerpts from an appropriate book which deals with the same issue in greater depth and complexity. Show the class how written material can present issues of interest more thoroughly than television. Tell them where the book is available and how they might obtain it.

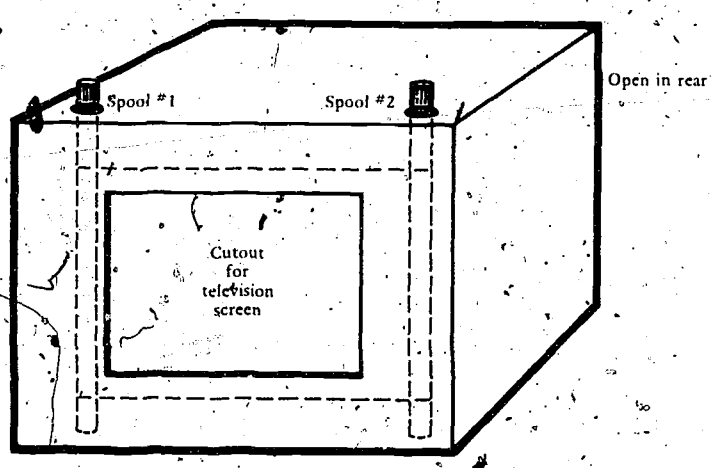
The topic of emotional maladjustment or mental illness is frequently referred to on television programs. Virginia Axline's *Dibs in Search of Self* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968) contains a fine description of the thoughts and feelings of an emotionally disturbed young boy. For teenagers there are many similar excellent books including Theodore Rubin's *Jordi* and *Lisa and David* (Ballantine Books, 1970); Hannah Green's *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* (New York: New American Library, 1964); and J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (New York: Bantam Books, 1964).

13. Encourage the students to use the "X-ray vision" or detective skill of a current television hero to find component parts or smaller words in compound words. This and the following activity are especially appropriate for primary graders as part of their structural analysis program.

14. Compile twenty compound words (such as campground, railroad, and so on) and write each of the component parts on a different slip of paper; then write one extra word on an additional slip of paper. Mix up the slips and randomly distribute them to the students. Ask the students to match the parts of the compound words, telling them that one word will be left over which indicates the hiding place of a current television villain. Before the activity begins, place a cutout of the villain in the indicated spot so that the students can go to the hiding place and find him at the conclusion of the activity.

15. Make a classroom "television" (Figure 4) from a large, heavy-duty cardboard box. Cut a television-screen-sized hole in the center of one end to simulate the

Figure 4. Classroom Television



Paper is wound from Spool #1 to Spool #2 as television show progresses

screen, leaving the opposite end of the box open. Make two small holes in the top corners of the box as shown in the illustration. Insert two round sticks (such as broomsticks) into the holes so that they extend from the bottom of the box through the hole at the top, protruding several inches above the top. Staple one end of a roll of brown butcher paper to the first broomstick (spool 1) and staple the other end of the paper to spool 2. When spool 2 is turned, the roll of paper is pulled across the screen.

Assign committees of students to reproduce an exciting episode of a recent favorite program by summarizing it and drawing key situations on the outside of the butcher paper together with appropriate dialogue or captions. One member of the committee turns the spool and the rest of the class watches the television show and reads the captions as they pass along the screen. At appropriate places commercials can be drawn and written to make the situation more realistic and to serve as a change of pace. Groups of students or individuals can be offered the option of writing original television plays or commercials and producing them in this manner. This activity is suitable mostly at the intermediate grade level although simplified versions of it can be produced by primary graders.

Comprehension Skills

1. Assign different students the task of watching favorite television shows for different purposes such as the following:

- summarize plot
- evaluate plausibility of episode
- suggest alternate ending to episode
- note how characters dress
- note how characters talk
- note which segments are funniest
- note which segments are most exciting

Shift assignments so that each student has had a chance to view different episodes of the same program for at least several different purposes. After class discussion introduce reading comprehension skills by pointing out that there are also different purposes for reading which call for different techniques of reading (skimming, reading for details, reading for critical evaluation). Illustrate with books dealing with television topics of interest.

2. Encourage students to watch a movie or some other program for which a critical review (of which they are unaware) has already been published. Have a discussion in class of their opinions of the program and then have them read and discuss the previously published critical review. Use this as an introduction to (or as practice in) reading for critical evaluation. Students can also be encouraged to write their own critical reviews of television programs. Later they can compare them with the reviews of other students and/or with published reviews in papers or magazines. Students might also be encouraged to set up their own standards for rating programs.

3. Have students watch television programs and write down recipes or instructions for other projects. Occasionally have this material duplicated so that a copy is available for each student and when practical have them actually try to follow the directions in class. This gives students practice in reading for following directions.

4. Compose an original plot based on a popular television program. Read the plot to students or have it duplicated and distribute copies to each student in the class. Omit the resolution of the plot and encourage the students to suggest or to write out their own endings. Such exercises give practice in following and predicting sequence of events.

5. Duplicate popular television commercials and distribute one copy to each student. Analyze the material

in terms of motivational techniques, "hidden persuaders," and as an introduction to techniques of propaganda.

Study Skills

1. Use a favorite television program to illustrate outlining and summarizing skills. Have the students check their summarizing efforts against the way in which plots are summarized in *TV Guide* or in the daily newspaper.

2. Encourage students to take notes during television shows, and use this information later in class as the basis for reconstructing the plot. Use the exercise to help students develop skill in the area of note-taking.

3. Put the results of the television preference survey on the board in the form of a graph and use this as the basis for introducing the concepts of graphs, charts, and measurements.

4. Make a list of television show references to persons, places, and things. If the students are unfamiliar with reference materials, show them how to use maps, atlases, encyclopedias, and other materials to locate this information. When appropriate, use maps in class to illustrate the locale of a particular television episode. Plot changes in locale and demonstrate how to compute mileage traveled.

5. Make a list of words used on television shows whose meanings students might not know. Use these words for instruction in the use of a dictionary. Along similar lines, be on the lookout for words which might be pronounced incorrectly or which might have multiple acceptable pronunciations (such as *route*). Assign students or groups of students the task of checking these pronunciations in the dictionary.

Content Areas

1. Be on the lookout for scientific or technical terms used in favorite shows. Mention these terms in class at the first opportunity. If the students do not know their meaning, show them how they can make use of structural analysis (prefixes, root words, and suffixes) coupled with analyzing the context in which the word was used to form educated guesses as to what the word means. Have them evaluate their educated guesses by checking them out in the dictionary. For example, here are several terms used frequently on a popular medical series broken down for class use:

- prog - nosis
- a - trophy
- a - typical
- a - phasic

  } to illustrate principle of alpha privative (initial *a* to negate following concept)

- bi - lateral
- ortho - pedic

2. Frequently such concepts as *allowance*, *budget*, and *commission* play a major role in television plots, or at least are mentioned in them. Discuss these terms in relation to the plot, and then use them to introduce (or to give practice in) their meanings.

3. International track and field events use the metric system of measurement. This can lead to a discussion of this system of measurement, comparison with the system used in this country, and methods of converting measurements from one system into the other.

4. Occasionally foreign coins or foreign currencies are mentioned on television shows. Use this opportunity to have your students look up these currency systems and determine their value in terms of American money.

5. Assign a student or a group of students the task of computing the amount of time devoted to commercials

and the amount of time devoted to the actual plot in several different popular shows. Use the data to introduce (or to demonstrate) the meaning of ratios and percentages.

6. If sponsors offer their products in terms of "easy payments" use these figures to illustrate the meanings of such terms as *interest* and *percentages*. If sponsors use *king size*, *giant size*, or *super size*, explain what these terms mean to students in terms of cost per ounce. Show students how to compute the cost per ounce, and to make a list of similar advertising expressions which could be confusing or misleading.

WRITING

1. Have students find out as much information as possible about a television star and write his biography.

2. Suggest that students write to sponsors or producers and give their opinions about shows. When there are proposed plans to cancel a favorite program, have them compose a petition, circulate it for signatures, and send it to the producers or to the sponsors. There is a helpful booklet entitled *National Television Advertisers* which consists of 45 pages of names and addresses of the presidents of the 1,200 companies which sponsor most television programs. This booklet, revised and updated annually, is available for $1.25 from Television Most Worth Watching, 3245 Wisconsin Avenue, Berwyn, Illinois 60402.

3. Have students write out lists of adjectives characterizing various figures in favorite shows. Encourage the class to discuss the appropriateness of these characterizations. When warranted, suggest the use of the dictionary for more precise synonyms for some of the terms.

Following is one such abbreviated list of adjectives compiled by a fourth grade class after watching an episode of *Gilligan's Island*:

- weird
- stuck-up
- cool
- brainy
- sneaky
- sexy
- loud-mouthed
- shrewd
- stupid
- ridiculous

4. Suggest that students write to television stars and ask them to list their favorite books or to suggest reading material which might be appropriate for a designated grade. Even if the reply is written by the television star's secretary, the recommendations appearing over the star's signature will sometimes carry extra weight with television fans.

5. Students might be encouraged to attempt to write original television scripts for popular programs, changing the setting to a different period of time ("The Brady Bunch in Colonial America") or to a different geographical location. Show students how to use reference books for authenticity or to give them practice in this activity to assure accuracy of detail. Before trying to write their own scripts the students could be encouraged to write to the studio requesting old television scripts. These scripts could be used as models for the writing of student-produced scripts.

6. Explain how to organize a fan club for a favorite television actor. Encourage students to write to the studio for information on chartering a fan club and for souvenirs, pictures, autographs, and other available materials. Once the fan club has been started, have

students exchange information with fan clubs in other parts of the country or in foreign countries.

7. Play popular television themes as background music for worksheet assignments, creative writing, or other similar types of student activities. Some types of music detract from rather than facilitate efficient work, so experiment with different types of music to determine the effect on your class.

8. Ask students to watch a television show paying particular attention to a specific character. They should be advised to take notes about how the character is portrayed, considering questions such as the following:

- How does this character act, talk, or feel under specific circumstances?
- Does his way of expressing feelings differ from the other characters?
- Can you think of any ways in which the character's thoughts or feelings might have been expressed more effectively?
- How does character portrayal differ in television, radio, and in writing?
- How would you portray the character in a specific situation if you were doing it in straight writing, writing for radio, or writing for television?

9. Encourage students to write different original endings for a recent television plot. Some of the students might use this experience as a springboard to the composition of complete original plots.

10. Have the students draw pictures of family groups on popular television shows and write or tell stories about them. Use this as a transition to drawing pictures of their own families and then writing or telling about them.

11. Ask the students to list the sequence of events of a recent program favorite. Number each event and divide the class into groups to correspond to the total

number. Next, number each event and randomly assign each number to a different group of students. Each group of students then has the task of writing the caption for their event and drawing a picture to illustrate it. When the task is completed the events are assembled in correct order and stapled into a booklet for the students to look at and read.

12. Have the students write critical reviews of selected television programs. Offer prizes to the students who write unusually good reviews and/or arrange to have these reviews published in the class or school newspaper.

SUMMARY

One of the best things about using the television watching habits of your students to supplement your classroom reading program is that it forces you to keep in touch with the interests of your students and to change the content of your teaching material accordingly. This is a continuing process. Yesterday's television programs are no longer suitable for today's students, and today's programs will not be pertinent for tomorrow's students. Bringing television into the classroom encourages you to become aware of a changing world as depicted through this medium and to use this knowledge as a means of making your teaching more exciting and relevant.