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ABSTRACT

Responding to a need indicated by President Reagan's 1983 Initiative on Adult Literacy, this monograph considers the past, present, and future uses of television technology in literacy programs. Recognizing the amount of time Americans spend viewing television and the new possibilities for service delivery offered by such technological developments as cable TV, videocassettes, and videodiscs, the document presents a classification scheme of literacy levels, examines literacy programming of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, and describes the British Broadcasting Corporation's pioneering outreach programs. Advantages and disadvantages of TV as an instructional medium are considered, as well as the potential audience; kinds of programming at Federal, state, and local levels; new applications of existing programs; and the use of innovative technologies to reach adult illiterates. The authors conclude with a moderate view of electronic media as part of an ecology of learning and stress the need for engaging leadership to meet the literacy challenge, perhaps in the spirit of campaign or competition that motivates other areas of American life. An appendix provides a comprehensive list of literacy television programs, including titles, descriptions, and information on availability. References are also listed. (SK)

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TELEVISION TECHNOLOGIES IN COMBATING ILLITERACY

A Monograph

Barbara A. Marchionis
and
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NATIONAL ADULT LITERACY PROJECT
FAR WEST LABORATORY

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TELEVISION TECHNOLOGIES IN COMBATING ILLITERACY

A MONOGRAPH

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FAR WEST LABORATORY FOR
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In this decade, America faces serious challenges on many fronts: To our national security, our economic prosperity, and our ability to compete in the international marketplace. If we're to renew our economy, protect our freedom, we must sharpen the skills of every American mind and enlarge the potential of every individual American life. Unfortunately the hidden problem of adult illiteracy holds back too many of our citizens, and as a Nation, we too pay a price."

President Reagan, 1983*

*A Quote taken from President Reagan's Adult Literacy Initiative announcement on September 7, 1983.

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ABSTRACT

THE PROBLEM

- o There are as many as 26 million Americans who cannot read or write.
- o There are as many as 72 million Americans who are functionally illiterate, not being able to read or write above the fifth grade level, not able to fill out employment applications or follow written job directions.
- o Forty-seven percent of all black 17 year olds are functionally illiterate, a figure that will go up to 50 percent by 1990.
- o Fifty-six percent of all Hispanic Americans are illiterate.
- o Sixty percent of all inmates in correctional institutions are illiterate. It costs \$6.6 billion a year to keep them in jail.
- o 2.3 million illiterates are added to the population each year.
- o Only 2-4 percent of American adults requiring literacy services are reached by the present array of public and private literacy programs.

THE OPPORTUNITY

In 1983 President Reagan engaged the problem in announcing the Adult Literacy Initiative. Secretary of Education Terrell Bell followed through by organizing a many faceted National Adult Literacy Project to increase public awareness, promote cooperation and collaboration between the public and private sectors providing the necessary services, and improve those services through the spread of information available on literacy practice and instruction. This public-private sector effort was joined by the Business Council for Effective Literacy, the Coalition for Literacy (a consortium of 11 national literacy and adult education organizations), and the Advertising Council.

THE PRESENT MONOGRAPH

As part of the effort to explore the best ways to meet the literacy challenge, the present monograph considers the past, present, and future use of television technology in literacy

programs. Recognizing that after work and sleep, Americans spend more time viewing television than any other activity, and recognizing that technological developments in cable television, video-cassettes and video-disc technology offer new possibilities for service delivery beyond broadcast television, the monograph considers the "state of the state" of the use of these technologies in the nation's literacy effort. In addition the monograph looks to the future and considers the following questions:

- o What adults are likely to be reached through television?
- o What can television do best for adult illiterates-heighten awareness and motivation and/or to provide direct instruction?
- o What kinds of programming should be developed and by whom?
- o What steps need to be taken to involve broadcasters in meeting the needs of the adult illiterate population?

THE CONCLUSION

A review of past and present efforts to utilize television technologies in meeting the literacy challenge suggests that the nation has barely scratched the surface of their possibilities. Yet as the nation deepens its commitment to increase human competence among all of its citizens there is hope that television technologies can play a more vital role in moving us past the 2-4 percent level of service and truly engage the unacceptable problem of adult illiteracy in the United States.

CHAPTER 1

TELEVISION AND ADULT LITERACY: AN OVERVIEW

Introduction

As the nation entered the decade of the eighties, the scope of the international economic challenge and the need to transform the American economy to remain competitive finally reached national consciousness. Business leadership identified the need for a sharp rise in human competence, inventiveness and entrepreneurship as vital to the transformation. FORTUNE magazine provided the tag line by calling on all Americans to "work smarter." The nation's political leadership picked up the issue shortly thereafter and through a score of national commissions have succeeded in placing education back on center stage. Almost every state legislature has responded by raising graduation standards and implementing a number of other reforms.

It was in this climate that the problem of illiteracy reappeared, as it seems to every decade, and the National Literacy Initiative organized under the sponsorship of Secretary of Education Terrell Bell in cooperation with a number of private sector literacy organizations. The nation discovered that one in five adults could not read or write. The nation discovered that over half of the nation's adults are functionally illiterate, unable to read or write past the fifth grade level. Even more seriously the nation discovered that, after three decades of voluntary and public adult literacy programs, the growing illiteracy of the young meant that each year the adult problem was also growing worse.

As the National Literacy Initiative organized to mobilize the necessary resources to engage the literacy challenge more effectively, it was clear that better "intelligence" on the problem and approaches was required. The National Institute of Education contracted with the Far West Laboratory and The NETWORK, Inc., two experienced educational R&D organizations to provide such "intelligence." The present monograph is one of the products of the National Adult Literacy Project (NALP).

The electronic media, broadcast radio, television, cable, and their further elaboration through audio and video-cassettes, video-disc, and interactive computer communications technology, have been a growing part of our national life for over sixty

years. In 1922, at the First Radio Conference of America, its organizer, Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, saw the new media as a boon to personal, family, community, and national development.

In 1984 the average four-year old will watch an average of 27 hours of television a week. Young Americans will, between the years of six and eighteen, watch an average of 18,000 hours of television while spending 15,000 hours at school (assuming perfect attendance and total time on learning tasks). After work and sleep, television viewing is the third most popular activity for American adults. Given the scale and influence of the electronic media in our lives it is appropriate that we explore the current and possible role of the electronic media in the nation's Literacy Initiative. The present monograph will offer a context for the exploration, will provide a summary of the "state of the state" of media-based literacy programs (primarily television), and will conclude with a series of recommendations.

The Educational Context

Viewed in the context of American education and learning, the nation's literacy programs have had to live in the "back-of-the-bus." Given the scope of the problem, the handful of faithful literacy workers have had to subsist on meager resources. In contrast to the other learning professions and fields, the theoretical, research and training base is less than modest. Not surprisingly the field survives with a strong evangelical commitment to direct service to clients. Given its meager resources direct service consists largely of simple reading and writing instruction. Other support and follow-through services are generally unaffordable. Therefore, after decades of effort, however modest, we have little firm knowledge on the effect of our programs.

During the periodic rediscovery of the illiteracy problem, the media play a modest role in raising citizen consciousness. There is the news story reporting the President's announcement of the Initiative. There is the follow-up story reporting on a Governor's or Mayor's intention to expand the literacy effort at state and local levels. The head of the local literacy commission or voluntary literacy agency will be interviewed on local radio or television with a phone number for both clients and volunteer tutors to call. PSA's (Public Service Announcements) will begin to appear on radio and television to motivate both potential clients and volunteer tutors to

action. In time, a prime time documentary often featuring a well-known personality will be aired. With these modest contributions, the media have discharged their public service responsibility and we are grateful.

Before the present National Literacy Initiative began, the aggregate literacy effort was reaching 2-4% of those in need, and even fewer of those most in need--the hard core illiterate. Even if the present Initiative doubles the aggregate effort, only 4-8% of those in need will be reached. So a linear approach building on the present literacy infrastructure and the marginal contribution of the media will barely dent the problem. We feel it important to spotlight the present context in order to widen the literacy dialogue to broaden understanding and other options.

First, it is important to note that literacy workers and their programs are not the only back-of-the-bus group within the nation's educational enterprise. Given the fragmented nature of the educational enterprise other continuing educators, job trainers, corporate human resource developers, church educators, librarians, and military educators all are given to feel some distance from the mainstream K-12 and higher educators, thus contributing to a sense of isolation and second-class status.

Yet any examination of the state of the mainstream K-12 and higher education context reveals its own internal fragmentation and pecking order problems. While all of the fragments comprise a nation's educational effort there is an absence of common vision, common purpose and common identity among its parts. This contextual reality creates competition for resources, for influence, and for clients. One of the consequences is a failure to synergize the aggregate effort, as each fragment behaves as though the others have nothing to contribute. Another consequence is the pitting of "influentials", be they in the business, civic or political leadership, against one another in support of their favorite programs instead of promoting a coalition mentality. Additionally, the public, confronted with this mosaic of educational programs, is deprived of a sense of the need and value of the totality of the nation's support of its learning needs. Finally, and perhaps most unfortunate, the present educational context is inevitably institution or program-centered when its ostensible goal is to be learner-centered. Unless the citizen-learner has a clear set of messages on the changing learning tasks and how to engage them, the enabling programs will fall short of the mark.

While this discussion of the fragmented educational context may appear to exceed the scope of this paper on broadcasting and literacy, it provides a basis for understanding the minimal role of the media in support of literacy and, indeed, all educational programs. Put yourself in the role of a television network or local television station executive. Your task is to provide the kind of programming that builds audiences and produces a profit for the network or station. Until the Federal Communications Act of 1934 is revised you also have an obligation to provide a modest amount of public affairs programming including the eagerly sought for PSA's. Each year you will be approached by representatives of each of the educational fragments, as well as all of the other public, community and human service agencies for a piece of the public affairs time and budget. Since you cannot accommodate them all you will tend to make your decisions on the basis of the topicality of the issue or the power that is brought to bear.

Clearly there would be some benefit if the educational fragments could arrange to work together to optimize the limited time available. But of course that would require the beginnings of a common vision and sense of common purpose. We know of no community in the United States where the educational fragments have come together to explore and develop a media strategy through which to orient the citizenry.

While we tend to be grateful for the periodic PSA, news item, or rare documentary, the exposure is just a smidgen of the exposure required to orient and motivate the citizenry to their changing learning tasks. Our gratitude for the media crumbs is conditioned by our acceptance of the media as it is currently constituted. To conclude this discussion of context it is necessary to raise the question of the media's mission.

In 1922 Secretary of Commerce saw the emerging electronic media as vital to the development of the nation and its people. He warned that public purpose ought to dominate commercial interest, and the Federal Communications Act of 1934 carried a remnant of that vision in its public affairs requirement. For sixty years the electronic media have grown and prospered, but have become increasingly remote from Hoover's vision. In the past year as the nation has sought to strengthen the learning process and produce the competencies necessary to meet its challenges, NOT ONE OF THE NATIONAL REPORTS HAS DISCUSSED THE ROLE OR RESPONSIBILITY OF TELEVISION AND THE OTHER MEDIA in achieving this goal.

John Goodlad, in A Place Called School, wistfully concludes that television is more the common school in contemporary American society than the public school. If the media have become so central in our lives, it may be time to explore their present and possible contribution to the promotion of literacy and all of our other learning objectives in a more fundamental way. We might just be able to do better than PSA's.

The Media Culture and Literacy

While our sense of context suggests that literacy workers and all other educational providers mostly stand outside looking into the media store, we need to remind ourselves that the citizens we seek to help spend much of their time consuming the media's product. Therefore, to conclude this introductory section we would like to explore, in a speculative way for there is little hard evidence, the media's present contribution to literacy and other educational goals.

As we have already suggested television viewing is the highest consumer of Americans' time and attention after work and sleep. The less educated and poorer citizens spend considerably more time viewing television than the better educated and well-to-do. The class of impoverished minorities average 46 hours a week watching mostly commercial television fare. While most viewing is for personal and family entertainment the potential for more directed learning is inherent in the medium.

Broadcast television, video-cassette and video-disc technology is widely used for instructional purposes in the K-12 and higher education sectors. With adult illiterates the issue of motivation becomes more critical and adult educators have given as much attention to the use of television technologies to motivate illiterate adults as well as to provide direct instruction. Since many adult illiterates fail to avail themselves of the existing programs because of situational, institutional, and low self-esteem barriers, there is the hope that television can help overcome the perceived barriers.

Our speculations on the impact of television on literacy follows the classification scheme devised by George Eyster (1982). The following chart presents that scheme.*

*This simplified version of Eyster's framework has been cited in several documents of the National Adult Literacy Project and is replicated here for its usefulness to our discussion.

CLASSIFICATION SCHEME: LEVELS OF LITERACY

Group 1: Highly Functionally Literate

Skill Level: High

Economic Security: High

Attitude Toward Education: High

Participation Characteristics: Easy to attract, easy to reach

Group 2: Moderately Functionally Literate

Skill Level: Moderate

Economic Security: Moderate, variable

Attitude Toward Education: High

Participation Characteristics: Easy to attract, frequent scheduling difficulties

Group 3: Functionally Illiterate

Skill Level: Low

Economic Security: Low

Attitude Toward Education: Low self-concept from previous failure colors their attitudes

Participation Characteristics: Difficult to attract, difficult to hold

Group 4: Illiterate

Skill Level: Lowest

Economic Security: Below poverty level

Attitude Toward Education: Very fatalistic

Participation Characteristics: Very difficult to attract

Given the Group 1-4 literacy classification scheme, we would suggest that those of us who are in Group 1, the fully literate, have lived in a developmental environment which gave us the necessary life

learnings to engage the personal, familial, communal and economic challenges. With all the ups and downs of a lifetime we survive because we have learned to adapt, cope, and utilize the institutions around us. Group 1 individuals use the media for their selective entertainment but also as a primary source of relevant information relating to danger, emerging problems, trends, and opportunities. We also use the media to participate in the public events of our time. For our children we will take some responsibility for pre-school literacy development and use "Sesame Street" and other quality children's programming to reinforce our efforts. While the media can hardly take responsibility for Group 1 literacy, we would conclude that they are a useful tool in the ongoing process of learning and adaptation.

Those in Groups 2 and 3, who are on the edges of functional literacy, have grown up in a more problematic developmental environment in which formal education, for whatever reasons, was not the equalizer. But they are still coping and comprise the prime candidates for literacy programs. They are also prime consumers of television fare. But given the discrepancy between the reality of their lives and the media, would Groups 2 and 3 receive messages and information that help empower them to make more of their lives? We believe, for the most part, not. This is not in any way to denigrate the contribution that entertainment makes to their lives.

For Group 4 the poverty of the developmental environment has made for hopelessness and defeat. As all literacy workers know Group 4 adults are the most difficult to motivate to try. Ken Auletta's recent book, The Underclass, paints a grim picture of this part of our society and the enormous courage required to try again. Radio and television are very important in the lives of Group 4 people, but more as a poultice than as a goad to improve their condition.

In our lifetime the Civil Rights Movement, especially during the pre-eminent leadership of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., empowered and reinforced achievement and coping on the part of millions of black Americans. The media played a significant role in amplifying the Movement's messages, demonstrating that there are times when the media can contribute to the raising of personal, family, and communal sights.

It is within this tangential media environment that literacy workers have sought to utilize the media to advance their cause.

CHAPTER 2

REACHING THE ADULT ILLITERATE: THE APPLICATION OF TELEVISION TO THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Television and radio are effective, compelling mediums that bring entertainment into millions of American homes. Attached to the entertainment element are information/news programming and a myriad of advertising "spots" to influence the American consumer. In spite of technological advances like computers, television still has a dramatic appeal. Commercial programming such as the infamous "Dallas" and "Dynasty" as well as public broadcasting's audience-drawers, such as "Masterpiece Theatre" and "Nova" hold captive millions of Americans in their living rooms.

For the adult illiterate, television and radio programming are critical to their lives. Much of their information comes from these sources when reading print is not an option. Keeping this in mind, we wonder why there have not been sustained efforts to reach the millions of illiterates through television--a medium that already occupies a well-established place in their homes? Although our introduction emphasizes that there have been few sustained efforts, this does not mean that there have been no attempts. In fact, the sections that follow describe numerous television programming attempts that target the adult illiterate.

In this chapter, we highlight past efforts to use television both as an awareness/motivational and instructional tool to reach adult illiterates. Beginning in the fifties and concluding with the seventies, we describe television programming that sprouted and withered over time. In the journey through three decades of programming, the persistent question of whether or not television can be an effective instructional medium for illiterates constantly resurfaces. Likewise, our travels through "TV land" present the reader with similar programming themes, trends, and formats. The real challenge is to escape these established programming boundaries and to test the capacity of television as part of a learning delivery system that can be utilized by illiterates.

Three Decades of Literacy Programming

Telephone interviews with approximately one hundred professionals in the fields of adult education and broadcasting in combination

with and extensive literature search* assisted us in formulating a picture of previous television programming. In sections that follow, a review of the television programming of the fifties, sixties, and seventies is presented.

The Fifties. In *Adult Literacy in the United States*, Cook (1977) presents a comprehensive social and historical review of literacy from 1900 through the 1970's. Readers are introduced to a powerful and potentially effective new format in the fifties--television. In 1957 at WKNO-TV in Memphis, television was used for the first time as an instructional medium for illiterates.

Using the Laubach Method,** a program was designed and aired to approximately 57,000 adult illiterates in Memphis, Tennessee (Cook, 1977, p. 70).

The program was designed to bring illiterates through grade level four. So it was estimated that 359 hours would be needed to achieve this goal. The 350 hours included half-hour television lessons three times a week, and homework supervised by volunteers in the viewing centers. Thirty-four of these television reading centers were established by the time the program was ready to begin (Cook, 1977, pp. 70-71).

Although Cook reports that at the end of two years the program brought 2,000 adults (or 3% of the potential public during this period) to a functional literacy level, other indicators cast doubt on the success of the program:

- o It discovered that some adults were impatient with the slow program pace; yet, a faster pace produced other disgruntled learners or discouraged ones.

*Three primary sources, classics in the field of adult literacy, served as significant guides in this chapter, (Hunter & Harman, 1979; Cook, 1977; and Maddison, 1971). For complete citations see References at the end of the monograph.

**Laubach Literacy Action is one of the two major voluntary literacy organizations, the other being Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA), in the United States. Laubach, like LVA, matches volunteer tutors to students who want to learn basic reading, writing, math, and English as a Second Language skills. They also offer extensive tutor training programs and various instructional materials.

- o It was discovered that learning levels decreased when learners were absent more than forty-eight hours between instructional periods (Cook, 1977, p. 71).

Surprisingly, even with questionable success, many requests were made to obtain the lessons, and program tapes were sold to other interested television stations.

The Sixties. According to Maddison (1971), as the federal Adult Basic Education Program expanded, resources were targeted to special priorities such as educational technology. As an outgrowth, two well-known projects-- "Operation Alphabet" and "Learning to Read" appeared.

"Operation Alphabet" was a television series consisting of 100 half-hour videotaped programs developed by the Philadelphia Public School Adult Education Program, and later distributed nationally by the National Association for Public School Adult Education.

"By 1964, one hundred cities--including nearly all of the largest in the United States-- had shown the series" (Maddison, 1971, P. 10). Cook (1977) cites several studies that support that as a series it was met with "various degrees of enthusiasm" (pp. 90-91). Some of the reasons cited were insufficient publicity, use in inadequate facilities, poor choice of viewing time, and poor pacing.

"Learning to Read", on the other hand, is the only program from this decade, according to our information, that is still on the air. According to Naomi Bauernfeind, teacher-host of "Learning to Read" on Channel 11 (CBS), Baltimore, the series (30 minute programs designed to teach reading to adults at the 0-4 level) has been on the air for approximately 20 years. Individual shows air M-W-F at 6:00 a.m. and Saturday/Sunday at 6:30 a.m. Lessons cover such reading skills as word recognition, comprehension, and phonics. Approximately 5,000 viewers respond to the television station for supportive worksheets. Requests come from correctional institutions, hospitals, and English as a Second Language organizations, as well as high school drop-outs themselves.

While these programs were flourishing in the United States, major innovative international programming efforts (e.g., Mexico, Brazil, Yugoslavia, United Arab Republic, Chile, to name a few) to combat illiteracy through radio and television were also popular. Although international television programming is not the focus of this monograph, we refer interested readers to Maddison(1971) and Hunter and Harman (1979).

Several major points summarize programming in the sixties:

- o Although instructional programming managed to reach some illiterates in their homes, the attempt was largely unimpressive because there was a serious problem motivating adults to take advantage of this opportunity (Cook, 1977).
- o Poor timing and poor program pacing were two identified causes of adult disinterest.
- o A small percentage of adult illiterates in the U.S. were actually reached by this programming.

In essence, Cook (1971) summarizes the decade as "unimpressive," in fact, she concludes that "the mass approach is lacking in its ability to reach, hold, and teach the illiterate adult" (p. 91).

The Seventies. The absence of an impressive track record did not deter, in any way, another round of television programming attempts. Interest in literacy education through television persisted perhaps due in part to the sustained popularity of such programs as "Sesame Street" and "The Electric Company" for young children.

Several educational programs were produced during this period, such as "Your Future is Now", the nationally acclaimed KET/Cambridge Videotape GED Program. (See Appendix for a complete list of programming.) Most of the programs on our list have been used in off-air situations like closed circuit television in adult basic education programs. To a lesser degree, some of these programs (especially the GED series) have been shown on public broadcasting and/or cable television.

During this period, Great Britain embarked upon an impressive national literacy effort. We depart, briefly, to highlight and discuss this national model for some of its unique and successful features. David Hargreaves (1980), one of its prime developers, thoroughly portrays this model in his book Adult Literacy and Broadcasting: The BBC's Experience. Moreover, this model has been numerously cited because of its extensive, well-organized outreach efforts to the illiterate population (Hunter & Harman, 1979).

A National Model: The BBC's Approach to Adult Literacy

Beginning in 1972, the BBC, in cooperation with the Adult Literacy Campaign, began to seek ways it could make an important and significant contribution to solving the adult illiteracy problem in the United Kingdom. The plan was to develop appropriate television and radio programming between 1975-1978 based on several important assumptions:

1. The project would have a dual thrust--that in parallel with the attempt to contact and mobilize potential students there would be a continuing attempt to contact and mobilize potential volunteer tutors.
2. That the most effective use of television would be in reducing anxiety and stigma, rather than in instruction.
3. That our television programs should be transmitted in peak viewing time where non-readers might come across them, rather than in the usual "education" air-time. For this to be possible, our programs would need to be acceptable viewing to the mass literate audience, amongst whom non-readers were concealed. Success seemed most likely if the programs were short.
4. That if we were serious about using broadcasting to penetrate this problem, we should recognize that "educational" broadcasting was only one of the tools required. Much of our effort should go into persuading the producers and presenters of BBC "general" programs to make a common cause with us, restating the messages in their own style to their huge audiences, whether for pop music or for early evening current affairs (Hargreaves, 1980, pp. 5-6).

Out of this effort grew "On the Move" which in the first series consisted of fifty 10-minute programs aired three times per week prime time. The series had accompanying print materials. In "On the Move," well-known television personalities performed; key words were introduced in an appealing way and testimonies of nonreaders were given. Each program concluded with where the nonreader could obtain help and a phone number to call (Hargreaves, 1980).

Many observers of the BBC's effort see it as a pioneer for several reasons:

- o It orchestrated a national outreach effort.

- o It was extremely sensitive to the "stigma" of shame and frustration that adult illiterates may feel because they cannot read or write.
- o It was effective in coordinating a network of organizations at all levels to cooperate in order to serve the nonreader population.
- o It underscored television's ability to be a powerful motivator.

Indeed, the BBC's model was predicated on detailed planning and "political bridge building" (Ford Foundation, 1983). After the withdrawal of substantial funding, this program, too, withered and died. However, Hargreaves (1984) and others at the BBC strive forward with new efforts (a national letter writing program) on a more modest scale.

Summary

Several generalizations emerge in the wake of three decades of programming:

1. With the exception of the series "Just Around the Corner," a substantial amount of programming is instructional rather than solely motivational.
2. Although some programs target the nonreader (e.g., "On the Move," "We the People...Read," and "Operation Alphabet"), most television programming targets the adult illiterate at the 4-7 reading grade level. This is not surprising because many educators believe this group is easier to reach, capable of greater achievement, and less likely to have multiple social and physical problems as nonreaders. However, other educators argue that the myths surrounding the nonreader should be dispelled based upon their evidence of achievement results with this population (Guidebook for Effective Practice, NALP, 1985).
3. In general, several of the television series produced in the seventies are still available and somewhat popular. Yet, most adult education programs do not use television as a medium of any kind. In fact, few adult education programs have equipment or access to equipment, and they certainly do not have additional monies to spend on expensive equipment like video cassette recorders. Those with equipment complain about the lack of culturally relevant, creative, and interesting programming for adults.

In essence, are we using the sophistication of television technology to its fullest potential for adult illiterate programming? Clearly, we are not. And if we take anything from the BBC experience, it is the fact that television can be a powerful motivator. But can it be a powerful teacher as well? The following chapter explores the issues surrounding the unresolved controversy over television as a means of instruction.

CHAPTER 3

TELEVISION AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIUM: A LINGERING CONTROVERSY

Somewhere between the superficial gloss of a sitcom and the predigested programming of local news lies the strange nether world of instructional television (Pekich, 1978, p. 1).

Despite the fact that many Americans watch an inordinate amount of television programming both for entertainment and information, television is burdened by its own image--the "boob tube." The fact that adults and children stare for hours at the "tube" raises questionable doubt in the minds of some educators whether or not on-air broadcasting can be their ally instead of their foe (Education Week, 1984, September 5). Educators must compete with the slickness of television programming that holds home audiences' attention for approximately 6 1/2 hours each day (Carnegie, 1979).

In general, educators fear the one-way nature of television:

1. The principle of participation in the learning process will be removed due to the one-way nature of television.
2. The one-way nature of television may lead itself to programming that is largely didactic in nature.
3. Educators fear that the broadcasting technologies will by their knowledge have the greatest influence over instructional objectives--not the educators (Waniewicz, 1972, pp. 40-41).

Yet, it has been demonstrated by the Carnegie Commission and the massive compilation of Chu and Schramm (1979) in Learning from Television that television does indeed teach as effectively as any other methods of instruction when accompanied by favorable supporting conditions (A Public Trust, 1979). Because literacy is an audio-visual process and television is an audio-visual medium (Maddison, 1971), television has the capacity to be a flexible instructional medium combining various teaching methodologies with a repertoire of production techniques. Dry topics like some highly rote phonics activities can be made interesting by television technology.

Certainly, early childhood education has been greatly enhanced by the television program "Sesame Street" (Lesser, 1974). Indeed, Chu and Schramm (1979) explain that when parents watch with kids, children tend to show greater gains in reading. Therefore, we can speculate that perhaps some adult illiterates benefit indirectly from watching "Sesame Street" or "The Electric Company" with their children.

However, what we have seen so far for adult illiterates has been limited, perhaps primitive, as compared to the sophisticated techniques used in "Sesame Street" for pre-schoolers. Yet, Alan B. Knox (1979) suggests that television could be a much more powerful resource for the adult illiterate than is presently being utilized:

There is a general trend toward information use of television by older adults, but there is actually a decline with age for adults with more education and an increase with age for adults with less education Television appears to have potential for use by practitioners who seek to help adults increase their understanding and competence to deal with changes and adjustments during childhood (Knox, 1977, pp. 177-178).

Similarly, in a five-year summary of "The Electric Company," Joan Cooney (1975) posits whether or not American society will champion an effort to achieve universal literacy:

The jury is still out on whether American society (in which an estimated 25 million citizens are functionally illiterate) will marshal sufficient resources to achieve universal literacy. But this much we have learned from "The Electric Company": the medium of television is definitely one of those resources . . . the immense power and appeal of television can be applied to the reading of print I believe that the necessary resources exist in both commercial and non-commercial television to to serve the real needs of viewers . . . (Hoachlander, 1980, P. 17).

In a final report to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Eisenberg (1983) reports the following highlights gleaned from a summary of questionnaires returned by 1150 adult educators:

- o 32% of responding adult educators have used previously broadcast television productions for informal adult learning in the past.

- o 13% of responding adult educators have used previously broadcast radio productions for informal adult learning in the past.
- o 84% of responding adult educators are interested in using previously broadcast television productions for informal adult learning in the future.
- o 71% of responding adult educators are interested in using previously broadcast radio productions for informal adult learning in the future.
- o Subject areas of most interest:
 - 41% said professional development
 - 39% said self improvement
 - 38% said culture/humanities
 - 38% said public affairs
 - 38% said job/career training
- o Most available equipment:
 - 55% have videocassette recorders (68% of these have 3/4")
 - 55% have public television
 - 49% have commercial television
 - 41% have 16 mm film projectors
 - 55% have commercial radio
 - 42% have public radio
- o Greatest barriers to using previously broadcast television and radio productions:
 - 93% said "no information on available programs"
 - 91% said "high costs"
 - 77% said "lack of supplementary print materials"
 - 76% said "difficult rights negotiated" (Eisenberg, 1983, pp. 4-5).

From the information presented by Eisenberg, adult educators reveal that the lack of information about what is available represents one of the serious barriers to whether or not they use instructional or motivational programming. However, lack of program information, in this case, is synonymous with lack of quality television programming. Quality instructional programming for adults is a state yet to be achieved.

Perhaps if efforts applied to reaching and teaching children were as intensely focused on adults, we might begin to reach adults

"where they live" (Hargreaves, 1984) and help adult educators extend their dedication beyond the 2-4% of illiterates that seek help from literacy programs.

The Potential of Reaching the Disadvantaged Viewer Through Instructional Programming

Because most of the programming we are speaking about is shown on public, education or cable television (not network television), what is the nature of the audience that is most likely to view these literacy programs, if they view them at all? Although the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) have taken sincere steps to appeal to a diverse audience, they continue to draw viewers described below:

Evening viewers tended disproportionately to be age 35 plus, college graduated, retirees or professionals/owners/managers, income above average, no children at home, in metropolitan counties and equipped with Cable. The full-day profile was similar except for a shift favoring middle-aged persons with children at home (National Audience Report, 1984, May 28-June 3, PBS, p. 7).

Similarly, a report, *Attracting Minority Audiences to Public Television* (1984, April), for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, states that although blacks "tend to be more frequent viewers of television generally (averaging 46 hours per week, versus 36 hours for the total population)" 46% of all blacks in the survey "never" watch public television. The report goes on to say that "there is a clear tendency for blacks to rate commercial TV more favorably than public TV . . . they see commercial TV as more fun, for me, and more exciting" (p. 10).

On the other hand, the Hispanic audience although about average in terms of overall frequency of television use, conform to the general population by their frequency of public television use in that almost half of them never use public television, and roughly one-fourth watch it once a week or more (p. 13). Similar to blacks, Hispanics tend to give higher ratings to commercial television for its degree of "fun," excitement, variety, and interests, although they favor public television's strength in educational programming.

A much earlier report by Schramm (1968), stated that the public broadcasting audience has not changed significantly. And apparently from the present figures this statement continues to be

true. Indeed, viewers, then and now, are more likely than non-viewers to be well-educated, of high socio-economic status, achievers, fans of high culture, seekers of information, and active people.

Likewise, literature on the disadvantaged indicates that "disadvantaged people are high users of network television, often using television as a way to escape from the frustrating realities of their everyday lives. The disadvantaged most often chose television as the most credible form of media.* In fact, television was found to be "at least moderately useful" as an instructional medium in adult education programs. Successful programs appeared to focus on providing "helpful" information to assist the disadvantaged with their daily lives or to overcome their isolation and alienation.

Therefore, the evidence suggests that disadvantaged adults most often watch network programs, not adult education programs on public or cable television. Does it matter, then, whether or not educators continue to battle over the instructional television controversy when the illiterate population has already "changed the channel"?

The verdict for or against instructional television for adult illiterates remains a mystery as long as commercial networks remain outside the educational delivery system. The greatest impact is likely to occur when the rigorous planning and implementation strategies applied to other television programming are applied to programming for adult illiterates. If television continues to be an attractive medium both for motivating and instructing adults (and apparently is is), then serious instructional efforts have to be sustained. Likewise, commercial networks must join "the literacy cause" because, unlike their programming counterparts, they have already secured a place in the homes of millions of adult illiterates.

* For a detailed report see, Educational Television for Disadvantaged Adults: A Feasibility Study. Vol. 1 and 2. July 1971-1974. Funded by the U. S. Office of Education and sponsored by the Illinois Division of Vocational and Technical Education.

CHAPTER 4

CURRENT LITERACY PROGRAMMING

The eighties are marked by renewed interest in adult literacy. Efforts on the federal, state and local levels suggest that even in the shadow of the computer craze, experimenting with television programming still appeals to both adult educators and broadcasters. Chapter 4 illuminates some of the more recent applications of television to the illiteracy problem.

First, a discussion of federal, state and local efforts are presented. Next, recent instructional programming examples are described such as telecourses, the application of children's programming to adults, and potential programming through innovative technologies. Finally, the chapter concludes by discussing worthy programming proposals, old and new, that have never left the drawing board. The reasons why, prepare the reader for our concluding thoughts.

Federal, State and Local Programming Efforts

On September 7, 1983, President Reagan and Secretary Bell announced in a meeting of over 200 business and literacy leaders, a new effort to promote adult literacy in the United States. From the beginning, the Initiative, under the direction of Diane Vines, has continued to support the expansion and development of literacy programs. Vines has appeared on various television programs spreading awareness about the problem of illiteracy to the general public. The National Adult Literacy Project, as part of the Initiative, is meeting its goals of gathering, analyzing, and disseminating needed data on model literacy programs from across the country.

In particular, federal money is supporting several adult education programs that use television both for awareness/motivation and instruction. (For a complete list of these programs see Appendix). In addition to the national awareness created by the Initiative, the Coalition for Literacy, in partnership with the Advertising Council, Inc., released its long-awaited public awareness ad campaign in December 1984. The TV, radio, and print ads are directed toward two target audiences: the individual volunteer and the corporate sector. The following themes are incorporated:

- o learning to read builds basic self-esteem and dramatically opens up human potential
- o volunteer tutoring is a highly rewarding experience
- o being a caring, sensitive person is the key requisite for volunteering

Print ads appearing in leading business publications are designed to spark the interest of corporate executives. Two major themes are:

- o functional illiteracy is a major societal and corporate problem, frequently related to a loss of productivity and quality performance.
- o many functional illiterate adults are highly motivated and capable of learning to read, but more resources are needed to provide adequate learning services.

On the state and local levels, many efforts to recruit tutors, volunteers, and students rely on the media. TV and radio public service announcements are used along with local literacy programs producing their own documentaries to be aired on local channels (public, commercial, and cable). For example, in California, according to Kimberly A. Edwards, State GED Coordinator, Michael Leon, a well-known actor on Days of Our Lives (NBC), is serving as a role model for GED candidates by appearing on local talk shows, posters, etc. In Pennsylvania "Success Stories" produced by WPSX-TV at Pennsylvania State University, portrays successful stories of adults who learn to read and is being aired across the State.

An illustration of the use of television by a local program is provided by Portland Adult Community Education in Portland, Maine. The following quote taken from an interview with the director, Kathleen Lee, exemplifies how the program uses television as a resource to "spread the word":

We did a literacy documentary this year. . . we tied in with cable, the educational channel Around the time that they said they were going to do the "Can't Read, Can't Write" show, we thought, why don't we do something locally that would have an impact just on Portland.

There's a man that's interviewed on the tape and he tells about how he always got flowers for his wife. A real sentimental man. And that he could never fill out the card. and he had to have his co-workers fill out the card. Can you

Imagine having to do that? But can you imagine going to co-workers and having them to fill out this card for your wife? So he talks about that on the tape.

. . . The tape has been broadcast on Channel 7. It was used at a literacy volunteer training session that we held here at the Center.

The thing we need to do now is to try and get it on one of the local TV stations. We have not done that yet. But we'd like to try. And maybe this fall would be a good time to do that, with the emphasis on the national literacy media blitz.

In addition to local programming, many national documentaries have been broadcast recently. Some examples are (1) "Can't Read, Can't Write" by Capitol Cities Productions, (2) "What If You Couldn't Read?" by Dorothy Tod Productions, (3) "Wall of Words: Adult Illiteracy" by WBZ-TV, Boston, (4) "The Shame of a Nation" by King Arthur Productions, Inc., and (5) "The Pride of Jessie Hallum" by Telepictures, California. Aside from efforts to raise the awareness level of the general public, while simultaneously motivating illiterates to seek help, there are also numerous instructional programs being created that are described in the next section.

Instructional Programs.

Telecourses. One of the most prevalent ways instructional television has been useful is to offer a myriad of telecourses on a variety of topics for wide ranging audiences from adult illiterates to graduate students (see Appendix). Most telecourses, shown on public broadcasting channels or cable, are supported with print materials. Some of the courses are also available on video-cassettes.

The Application of Existing Television Programming in New Ways.

Using the innovative, popular series "Reading Rainbow" (designed to bring the magic of reading into children's lives with the help of host LeVar Burton), a new Boston project, "Collaboration for Literacy: An Intergenerational Literacy Project," is attempting to transfer that same magic of reading to adults. According to Dr. Ruth Nickse, Project Director, adult illiterates interested in reading to and with children on a regular basis are invited to participate. Adults are coached by tutors to

to read children's books featured in "Reading Rainbow." This unique approach allows adults, especially illiterate parents, to learn while helping their children.

Another existing program "Color Sounds," created by Dr. J. Michael Bell, is a basic education program using currently popular music videos. It is currently being aired nationally on Public Broadcasting. Some educators are currently investigating the potential of using this program with adults because of its success with teaching reading to young adults (4-12 grade levels) who were underachieving and lacking motivation.

Finally, a program, "Sing, Spell, Read and Write," which teaches how to read in 36 steps is being developed as a reading television series by Christian Broadcasting Network, Inc. (CBN). Susan Dickson, primary author, and Vida L. Daly, writer, believe the series will teach people to read whether they are remedial children, high school dropouts or adults who cannot read. However, the results of these new, innovative adaptations of existing programs are yet to be determined. Efforts such as Dr. Nickse's will provide critical data heretofore missing.

Potential Programming Through Innovative Technologies. Several new efforts are on the horizon that use advances in video technology for educational instruction. The National Captioning Institute (NCI), which began captioning TV broadcasts (ABC, NBC, and PBS) for the hearing-impaired in March 1980, now is working with researchers at Harvard to determine if non-native English speakers could benefit from captioning materials. In addition, NCI sponsored two exploratory studies conducted by Dr. Robert Wilson, Director of the University of Maryland Reading Center, and Dr. Patricia Kaskinen, a reading specialist who teaches at Gallaudet College. The following reading skills were used by teachers in the pilot studies: sight vocabulary skills, prediction skills, prediction/sight vocabulary skills, locating skills, comprehension/fluency skills, and fluency skills. Both teachers and students were enthusiastic about the use of closed captioned television in their classrooms. Teachers found that it was highly motivating material for their students and expressed a desire to continue using it. There is considerable enthusiasm for adapting this educational innovation for use with adult illiterates.

Second, the PBS National Narrowcast Service (NNS) is an innovative application of existing communications technology to meet the expanding learning needs identified by local communities.

Through the NNS, the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and its member public television stations will create a national resource for the distribution of instructional, educational, professional training, cultural and information video and ancillary materials. Implementation of this service is the logical next step in expanding the role of public television stations as telecommunications centers within communities (PBS National Narrowcast Service: A Concept Paper).

NNS contemplates many different uses for the system:

1. Transmission of formal course material to students enrolled in local institutions.
2. Specialized programming for inservice career training and for professional development.
3. Timely information about professional and technical activities and current developments in specialized fields.
4. A general information exchange for the nation's institutions of learning and culture (PBS National Narrowcast Service: A Concept Paper).

However, the NNS is just now piloting the system in a few sites; so the potentials, although seemingly great, are yet to be tested and realized for the adult illiterate population.

A final innovation involves developing and extending the use of interactive video-dics for use with adult illiterates. Some experts, like Dr. Marjorie E. Hoachlander, MEH Associates, view this technology as possessing educational potential for the adult illiterate because the learner participates--unlike in the one-way medium of television. Using this technology, the adult learner has control over program pacing, and furthermore, the learner can interact with the presented material seeking greater clarification and challenge.

Summary

Previous discussions on the state of the state of television programming raise one significant question for adult educators and broadcasters:

If television can reach adult illiterates, than what is required to strengthen its use to make it more interesting, relevant, and powerful?

This is not a new question. Rather, it is one that has been answered many times and by many voices. Yet, the result has remained the same--nothing happened. Recommendations have been suggested in such reports as the Final Report to the CPB on the Extended Uses for Television and Radio Productions . . . Community Outreach Through Existing Resources, (1983, August 30), and A Public Trust: The Carnegie Commission Report (1979).

Similarly, G. Lesser and J. Cooney (1974), using their experience with "Sesame Street", underscore the recommendations for collaboration between educators and broadcasters from the preplanning phase forward.

Another well-developed analytical discussion of literacy programming, accompanied by a developmental plan, was prepared by Dr. Ramsey Selden and Dr. Marjorie E. Hoachlander for the National Institute of Education (1980). Likewise, this piece emphasizes the need for collaboration between interagencies involved and a strong research and development component. To date, no action has been taken on this recommendation.

Besides numerous recommendations, many sound proposals are never pursued like the Adult Literacy Proposal, July 1981 by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Using the developmental model of the Children's Television Workshop, this proposal outlined a programming design for illiterates at the 4th-8th grade level.

Current proposals are being considered for their national potential such as the National Adult Literacy Media Cooperative directed by Tony Buttino, WNED-TV, Buffalo, New York and a state-wide campaign To Read to Live (1984), developed by Dr. Gary E. Miller, Pennsylvania State University.

First, the National Adult Literacy Media Cooperative is comprised of the following components:

1. Tutor Recruitment and Training
2. Student Recruitment/Motivation/Education (commercial network and WNED-TV)
3. Adult Oriented Supplementary Reading Materials

4. Computer Software Instructional Support
5. Outreach and Support

Only the first two components directly involve television programming. To Read, To Live, on the other hand, uses television to meet the following objectives:

- a. Portray life-coping skills for which reading ability is important.
- b. Introduce sight vocabulary words related to various aspects of life-coping skills.
- c. Motivate viewing adults to participate in formal literacy training.
- d. Build self-esteem.
- e. Reach a large number of adults through broadcast/cable-cast.

Neither proposal emphasizes formal reading instruction programming.

Given the "state of the state" of past and present television efforts, these current proposals, worthy in their own right, could gain greater power and effectiveness if they came to life within an ecological perspective proposed in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 5

TELEVISION AND ADULT LITERACY: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Having reviewed the "state of the state" of the application of television technologies to the nation's literacy over the past decades is there any summary conclusion we come to? For us the conclusion can be pessimistic or optimistic, depending on whether one views the glass as half full or half empty. As workers in the literacy vineyard we necessarily see the glass as half full or we would't struggle against the seemingly insuperable barriers before us. Therefore, let us acknowledge the pessimistic conclusion before we return to our native optimism.

THE PESSIMISTIC CONCLUSION:

- o For sixty years the electronic media have grown to play a dominant role in the lives of the American people and nation. Yet, given their stated mission the media play a peripheral role in the development of literacy, augmenting the other learning institutions at best.
- o For those citizens who have failed to develop minimal literacy skills during the developmental years, and who require adult literacy training, the media have played and are playing a marginal role in motivating and instructing these citizens to acquire the necessary competencies.
- o While unprovable at the moment we believe that for the vast number of illiterate or functionally illiterate citizens, the media have an unmotivating or narcotic effect, allowing these citizens to tolerate their condition.
- o The national imperative to raise up the competencies of all of our people to meet an uncertain future suggests we should not expect much help from the media, if history serves as a guide.

Having delivered the pessimistic conclusion we are quick to add that this conclusion is not intended to indict the media. We do not believe it was anyone's decision that the media should be so marginal in the development of the nation's human capital. It just grew that way! While there have been many advocates of a deeper role and responsibility for the media in the national

learning process, that issue has never been gotten to the level of a national debate. In the present climate of deregulation there is strong sentiment in the Administration and in the Congress that the modest statutory requirements for public affairs programming be eliminated and that market forces prevail. The absence of any reference to the role of the media in the education of the citizenry in any of the score of national reports on education hardly sends a strong message to the nation's broadcasters, commercial or public, to do other than what they are doing.

THE OPTIMISTIC CONCLUSION:

- o Despite the realities it is evident that literacy workers have been able to get a toe, if not a foot, in the door of the electronic media. As the preceding sections document, the nation has been fortunate in having many dedicated literacy workers develop media-based projects at local and state levels that demonstrably motivate and instruct those in need.
- o As the communications industry shifts from an era of channel scarcity to one of channel abundance in the age of cable, videocassettes and videodisks, the opportunities for use of mediated materials and delivery systems will increase.
- o Given the resources described in this monograph, any enterprising literacy worker or program can begin to move into the media age. This does not mean prime-time broadcasting, except for that occasional documentary or news item on the Six O'clock News, but it does mean easier access to a cable channel and certain access to a VCR.
- o As one surveys the changing character of media programming there is an exciting shift to a human and community development in AM Radio around the country. There has been no regulatory or moral drive for this transformation. Apparently such programming has a market and produces a profit.

The optimistic conclusion is intended to motivate literacy workers to shake their pessimism and to become aware that "something" can be done within the present context. Having worked so hard to get service to the 2-4% level, it is no small achievement to get the nation to the 4-8% level--again given the present context.

A Modest Vision

Let us suppose that we wish to move our efforts beyond the 4-8% level and truly engage the literacy challenge. What would we have to do and what would we see as the proper and feasible role of the media in such an undertaking? As a foundation for our modest vision let us explore a few issues:

o SINGLE ISSUE OR PART OF THE AGGREGATE LEARNING CHALLENGE:

As we suggested earlier literacy as well as all of the other categorical learning areas, k-12, higher education, job training, corporate HRD programs, church education, etc., are all presented to the public as single, unrelated issues. This means that only a small part of the citizenry see themselves as objects of any one service. The upshot is that each service must compete against the others for its place in the sun, implying that some are more important to others.

This fragmented and competitive state of affairs denies the nation the opportunity to see the learning challenge whole, precludes a cooperative, synergistic use of resources, and allows the media to remain marginal to the learning enterprise.

Therefore, we recommend that the cause of literacy would be advanced if the American people came to see literacy as one of a number of learning goals. We just need to learn that all of us have a stake in meeting all of our goals.

o FRAGMENTED SERVICES VS. AN EXPLICIT ECOLOGY OF LEARNING:

Literacy programs, as well as all of the other categorical learning services, operate as though the particular service is adequate to achieve its goals. Again, the example of the score of national reports proclaiming that the school is the exclusive site of human learning comes to mind. While all particular services are necessary to their goals, are they sufficient? Clearly parental, family, community, church, media, etc., support, reinforcement, augmentation, and encouragement are part of every learner's environment. Clearly the climate and substance of that environment may facilitate or inhibit learning.

Therefore, we recommend that literacy workers, as well as all other learning service providers come to see the reality of the ecology of human learning, and begin to work to strengthen that ecology in more explicit ways.

○ THE MEDIA AS PART OF THE NATION'S ECOLOGY OF LEARNING:

Once we come to the 'aha' that there is indeed an ecology of learning in which there is more to learning than the explicit institutional curricula, and that learning takes place in many settings, we quickly come to see the media as a vital and central part of the American learning process.

○ THE ISSUE OF TRANSFORMING LEADERSHIP:

Every profession and every institution involved in human learning has its own sense of mission, its own body of knowledge and its own set of programs and practices. No one profession or institution has the assignment to understand or guide the nation's ecology of learning. How then do we move from the fragments to the ecology perspective? Any profession or institution with the courage and vitality to renew itself can take the lead and reach out to the others. Indeed, we hope that the literacy field might take such an initiative as the best way to move past the 2-4% state of its development.

- But new ideas, even as obvious as the ecology of learning need political leadership to "educate" the nation to new understandings. The President, the Governors, and the Mayors as well as all of the legislative leaders at the three levels of government have the opportunity to play that transforming role for us. Without such leadership we have concluded that literacy programs, as well as all of the other categorical learning services, will remain isolated from one another with the citizenry remaining uninformed as to the scope of the learning challenge facing the nation, and, hence, unaware of their stake in the transformation.

Implementing the Vision

As literacy workers consider this modest vision of moving past the 2-4% stage of development, the task of moving toward an ecological strategy will seem beyond the capacity of the field. Yet, there is another domain of American life which is moving rapidly toward

explicit ecological understanding and management of its own environment. We recommend that all literacy workers read In Search of Excellence to see how business corporations are coming to understand and strengthen their "corporate culture" to better meet their goals.

The basic message of In Search of Excellence is that explicit goals communicated and owned by all employees can lead to a surge of creativity and productivity. If we look for parallels in our civic and public lives, the goal setting process is very primitive. Therefore, a sharpening of the nation's learning goals is a fundamental prerequisite for implementing a modest ecological vision. Another example may illustrate how to proceed.

In November 1983 WQED, the Pittsburgh Public Television Station in association with a number of other organizations aired a two-part documentary on drug and alcohol abuse in young people. Preceded by appropriate print materials and a local organizing effort the airing of "The Chemical People" was accompanied by 12,000 local, sit-down town meetings. A national television event was thus matched with a very local event that led to enhanced understanding of a major problem, discussion of that problem in each of 12,000 communities, and the development of a local action plan to engage the problem. Ten thousand of the groups that met on those two evenings are still in existence working on their action agenda. All of the media proposals described in Chapter 4 would benefit from a context of heightened awareness and commitment.

Any city, county, state, and indeed the nation as a whole could organize a similar process on its learning challenge. A mayor, a county executive, a governor, or the President could convene the relevant people to agree to present the aggregate learning challenge to the people, and get them to discuss how best to meet the challenge at local levels. And by local levels we suggest the neighborhood level for that is where ecological strengthening must ultimately take place through stronger families, civic associations, more nurturing churches, and outreaching schools.

Basic to sharper goal setting in such a process is information on a state of the problem. Here literacy and all other categorical learning services are at risk because the quality of educational achievement data, especially among adults, is so poor. But, given some kind of baseline data, a neighborhood, a city, or a state could set goals for improvement within the next year, or two to three.

Given such a goal matrix, which would include literacy goals, an action plan utilizing all resources would be created and implemented. Instead of the fragmented, isolated categorical programs we have today, there would be a basis for a cooperative synergy on a continuing basis. Moreover, since such a "campaign" would be news and of interest to the total community, city, or state, the rationale for heavy media involvement would exist. Instead of a one-shot news release, such a civic development process could bring continuing media reporting of the process and its accomplishments.

Given the absolute need to increase the competence of the American people to meet our many challenges, we might orient our "campaign" along the lines of our national love affair with competitive sports. Consider the information available in the sports section of the daily paper. Consider the sports reporter on the 6 and 11 o'clock television news in every city in the country. Consider our deepening interest as we come closer to the end of a season. Consider our sense of private and public virtue when our team wins the championship. There is no similar phenomenon when it comes to our learning accomplishments. Yet, there is no reason why we couldn't consider organizing such a competitive approach to our learning challenges, all with enhanced media involvement.

Although this modest vision moves us far beyond the present preoccupations of the literacy community, it does provide them and all of the other categorical learning services with a new and far more supportive environment for all who are involved in learning. By bringing the ecology of the learning perspective to life, media will have to face their obvious role in the learning process. By seeking to make learning newsworthy and an exciting part of the civic process, we present the media with a legitimate basis for programming instead of going hat in hand for a crumb of a PSA. It might just be a vision worth considering.

APPENDIX

A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF LITERACY TELEVISION PROGRAMMING

Subject Categories:

The Application of Children's and Young Adults' Programming to Adults

Available Adult Education Programming

Current Programming

Current Proposals

Federal/State Television Programming Projects

Literacy Documentaries

Local/Community Television Programming

National Literacy Campaigns

Telecourses/Educational Programming

Tutor/Teacher Training Programs

The Application of Children's and Young Adults' Programming to Adults:

1. "Color Sounds"

Piloted in 1983 by Southern Education Community Association. Nationally-aired on PBS in April 1984.

Creator: Dr. J. Michael Bell

Contact: Color Sounds
Austin, TX 78764

Description: A creative education program using popular music videos to teach reading, grammar and spelling. Highly motivational for underachieving youth.

2. "Reading Rainbow"

Reading series, with Le Var Burton as Host, made possible on PBS by Kellogg Company and Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Produced by: GNP/Nebraska ETV Network and WNED-TV, Buffalo, in association with Lancit Media Productions, New York.

Contact: Tony Buttino
Director of Educational Services and Human Resources
Public Television WNED
184 Barton Street
P.O. Box 1263
Buffalo, NY 14240

Description: Highly motivating reading series that brings books alive.

Available Adult Education Programming

1. "Your Future is Now" and "Read Your Way Up"

Producer: Jim McFadden

Available from: Manpower Education Institute
127 East 35th Street
New York, NY 10016

Description: The original series of "Your Future is Now" comprised of sixty 30-minute programs, was

produced in 1972. These programs were designed to prepare adults for a high school equivalency diploma. The series was targeted to the 6-7th grade level.

In 1975, thirty 30-minute programs on reading skill improvement were developed called "Read Your Way Up" (6-7th grade level).

Both programs have been used on public service and commercial stations as well as off-air on video-cassettes in over 40 states such as Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Alabama, and South Carolina.

2. "Another Page"

Available from: CAMBRIDGE
The Adult Education Company
888 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10106

Description: A video program in reading comprehension skills (5-8th grade level).

3. "Just Around the Corner"

Available from: CAMBRIDGE
The Adult Education Company
888 Seventh Avenue
New, NY 10106

Description: Released in 1978, this nationally known competency based video program was developed by the Mississippi Authority for Educational Television. Using a dramatic soap-opera format, the program covers five life skills established by the Adult Performance Level (APL) Project: consumer economics, occupational knowledge, health and safety, community resources, and government and law (Forty-five 1/4 hour videotapes, four videotexts).

4. KET/Cambridge Videotape GED Program

Available from: CAMBRIDGE
The Adult Education Company
888 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10106

Description: This nationwide acclaimed instructional program (thirty-four 1/2 hour video programs that include reading, English grammar and mathematics) developed by Kentucky Educational Television and released in 1973 is accompanied by a video-text component correlated with the videotape series. Lessons allow teachers to pace and individualize instruction.

5. "Performance"

Producer: Learning Trends, California

Available from: CAMBRIDGE
The Adult Education Company
888 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10106

Description: This twenty 1/2 hour series (with 1 videotext) features competency-based instruction in reading, writing, and survival skills (4-7 reading level).

6. "We The People . . . Read"

"Nosotros . . . Leemos" (Spanish version, 0-4 reading level).

Producer: Learning Trends, California

Available from: CAMBRIDGE
The Adult Education Company.
888 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10106

Description: The program is the only video-based literacy program in the world. Using a motivational variety show skit, each of the twenty interactive videotapes is accompanied by newspapers in order to develop basic literacy skills and Adult Performance Level (APL) Skills.

Current Programming

1. "Chemical People"

Contact: WQED-TV
4802 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Description: Addresses the growing problem of adolescent chemical use and dependency.

2. National Captioning Institute, INC..
Suite 1500
5203 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041

Contact: Sharon Earley
Executive Director, Marketing

Description: A useful, effective method in the teaching of reading. Research on the utilization of this method for adult illiterates is proposed.

3. PBS National Narrowcast Service

Contact: Mr. William T. Reed
Senior Vice President for Educational Services

Ms Linda Resnick
Project Manager, Narrowcast service

Public Broadcasting System
475 L'Enfant Plaza, West, SW
Washington, DC 20024

4. "Sing, Spell, Read and Write"

Producers/
Writers: Susan Dickson
Vida Daly

Contact: The Christian Broadcasting Network, Inc.
Virginia Beach, VA 23463

Description: A new television series, in the production phase, designed to teach reading in 36 steps. Based upon the instructional series "Sing, Spell and Read." According to the producers, the program can be used for adults as well as children.

Current Proposals

1. National Adult Literacy Media Cooperative

Contact: Tony Buttino, Project Director
WNED-TV
Box 1263
Buffalo, NY 14240

2. "To Read, To Live": A Statewide Campaign for Adult Literacy

Contact: Gary E. Miller, Project Director
The Pennsylvania State University
Instructional Media
120 Mitchell Building
University Park, PA 16802

Federal/State Television Programming Projects

1. California State Department of Education
721 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814-4785

Contact: Kimberly A. Edwards, State GED Coordinator

Description: Michael Leon, a famous actor on Days of Our Lives, serves as a statewide role model to motivate adult illiterates to earn their GED certificate. Leon makes public appearances, speeches, etc., on behalf of literacy.

2. "Can You Read Me?" A Video Documentary on Adult Illiteracy

Developed by: Peter Wiesner and Spencer Freund
Essex County College
Media Production and Technology Center

Available From: Adult Education Dissemination Project
Office of Adult Continuing Education
Glassboro State College
Glassboro, NJ 08028

3. Catalog of Adult Education Projects
Fiscal Year, 1983

Catalog of Adult Education Projects
Fiscal year, 1984

Available From: Clearinghouse on Adult Education
U.S. Department of Education
Division of Adult Education Services
Office of Vocational & Adult Education
Washington, DC 20202-3585

Description: Tables of 310 Projects are presented. some projects listed under Technology incorporate television into their instructional plan.

4. "Collaborations for Literacy: An Intergenerational Literacy Project"

Contact: Ruth Nickse, Project Director
Associate Professor
School of Education
Boston University
Boston, MA 02215

Description: A new project that uses "Reading Rainbow," a reading series for children, with adults.

5. Directory of Video Resources (Compiled June 1984)

Adult Basic Education Cable Television Services Project
#98-4024

Contact: Gary E. Miller, Project Director
Assistant Director, Telecommunications
The Pennsylvania State University

Available from: Pennsylvania Department of Education
Division of Adult Education and Training Services
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17108

Description: One of the most current useful resources on existing video programs.

6. "Success Stories"

Contact: The Pennsylvania State University
Commonwealth Educational System
Learning and Telecommunications Services
(WPSX-TV)
212 Keller Building
University Park, PA 16802

Literacy Documentaries

1. "Can't Read, Can't Write" (60-minute documentary)

Host: Johnny Cash

Aired: January, 1984

Executive Producer/
Director: Christopher Jeans

Production: Capital Cities' Television Productions
4100 City Line Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19131

Contact: William G. Mulvey, Director of Marketing

Description: Nationally syndicated on more than 140 stations.

2. "The Pride of Jessie Hallam"

Contact: Telepictures, California

3. "The Shame of a Nation"

Contact: King Arthur Productions, Inc.
Arthur Barron
1278 Glenneyre
Suite 1054
Laguna Beach, CA 92651

Description: The film focuses on three adults' successful efforts at overcoming their illiteracy.

4. "Wall of Words: Adult Illiteracy" (60 minute documentary)

Producer: Kenn Tucci

Associate
Producer: Lois Harmon

Contact: WBZ-TV
1170 Soldiers Field Road
Boston, MA 02134

5. "What If You Can't Read?" (28-minute documentary, 1978)

Producer: Dorothy B. Tod

Contact: Dorothy B. Tod Films
20 Bailey Avenue
Montpelier, VT 05602

Local/Community Television Programming

1. "Access to Community Education"

Boston Community Schools Program
26 West Street
Boston, MA 02111

Contact: Jules Slavet
Supervisor of Planning & Development

John Walker
Television Producer

Description: Programming includes such topics as education,
general information, and community empowerment.

2. "Learning in the Community" (LINC)

Contact: Quincy Junior College
34 Coddington Street
Quincy, MA 02169

Dr. Lonnie Carton's Learning Center
4450 Prudential Tower
Boston, MA 02199

Quincy Community Television
Steven Marks
81 School Street
Quincy, MA 02169

Description: Special Series to aid women entering the Job
market. A creative example of community and
cable organizations working together to produce
quality programming.

3. "Reasons to Learn"

Author/
Producer: Carlos Salamanca

Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experience
(SCALE)
99 Dover Street
Somerville, MA 02144

Contact: Walter Perq

Description: A 14-minute color production about the program--
used as a medium for student recruitment.

National Literacy Campaigns

The Advertising Council (with Coalition for Literacy)
825 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Contact: Norma Kramer, Campaign Manager

Telecourses/Educational Programming

1. Albany Educational Television
27 Webster Avenue
Albany, NY 12203

Contact: Deborah S. Clark

Description: Adult basic Education Series (videotapes)

2. The Center for Communicative Media
University of Massachusetts at Boston
Harbor Campus
Boston, MA 02025

Contact: Robert F. Dwyer, Associate Director

3. Dallas County Community College District
Center for Telecommunications
Office of Information and Distribution
4343 North Highway 67
Mesquite, TX 75150-2095

4. HBJ Media Systems Corporation
A Subsidiary of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
Orlando, FL 32887

Contact: Linda A. Pfister, Vice President

Description: Reading System: Developmental Studies Program.

5. Miami-Dade Community College
District Administrator
11011 S.W. 104th Street
Miami, FL 33176

Contact: Cynthia Elliot, Manager

Description: The AVT Learning System in Reading.

Tutor/Teacher Training Programs

1. "Basic Reading and English as a Second Language Tutor Training Workshops" (1983).

Producers: Hartford CATV Community Programming
Literacy Volunteers of Connecticut

Contact: Literacy Volunteers of Connecticut
Hartford, CT

Description: The Basic Reading Series consists of eleven 1-hour tapes and includes the Language Experience Approach, Sight Words, Phonics, Word Patterns, Comprehension, and the READ Test. Twelve 1-hour tapes comprise the ESL series and cover the areas of Intercultural Communications, Listening Comprehension, Basic and Creative Drills and Techniques, and Survival and Language Skills.

2. "Basic Reading Tutor Training Workshop"
Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc.

Produced and Underwritten by: New Jersey Department of Adult Education.

Contact: Jinx Crouch, Executive Director
Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc.
404 Oak Street
Syracuse, NY 13203

Description: Video version of literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. (LVA) Basic Reading Tutor Training Workshop. Accompanying print materials and guides will be available by spring 1985.

3. Literacy Instructor Training: A Handbook for Literacy Instructors--LIT-TV (1977)

Produced by: Anabel P. Newman & Michael S. Parer

Contact: Dr. Anabel P. Newman, Director
Reading Practicum Center
Institute for Child Study
10th and Bypass
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47401

Description: These materials present five workshops for teaching reading to adults at the lowest levels of educational development, and they present guidelines for maintaining sound instructional learner relationships.
(Produced for the State of Indiana under Section 309 of the Adult Education Act.)

4. "Out of the Shadows"

"Once More With Meaning"

"Choosing Directions"

Contact: TV Ontario Marketing
Box 200, Station Q
Toronto, Ontario M4T 2 T1

Judy Wade
TV Ontario Marketing
4825 LBJ Freeway
Suite 163
Dallas, TX 75234

Description: These programs "explore the problems of illiteracy, and suggest practical ways in which tutors, teachers, and other interested adults can help someone who has difficulty with the written language.

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