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 TITLE Literacy by Radio: Lessons from around the World.
 PUB DATE Jul 90
 NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the International Symposium of Popular Literacy by Radio (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, July 1-3, 1990).
 PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; Adults; Age; Audiovisual Aids; Basic Skills; Broadcast Journalism; Commercial Television; *Educational Radio; Foreign Countries; Geographic Location; Long Range Planning; Popular Culture; Production Techniques; Program Effectiveness; *Programing (Broadcast); Sex Differences; Student Recruitment
 IDENTIFIERS *Europe; *Latin America

ABSTRACT

Adult illiteracy is a worldwide problem. Illiterate adults are the most difficult to teach and to reach because illiteracy is characterized by embarrassment and low self-esteem. Given that radio is heavily used by lower income and less educated people, literacy projects utilizing radio were attempted in 40 countries between 1960 and 1974. The main roles for broadcasting in these projects have been to (1) raise awareness of politicians of the need for and benefits of program provision; (2) recruit potential students and volunteers to projects; and (3) provide audiovisual materials to assist face to face tuition. Latin American radio schools have used radio didactically, as the main medium of instruction, unlike other countries. There is no single homogeneous audience for adult literacy programming, but a variety of open and closed audiences. There are also major differences in interest between urban and rural audiences, men and women, and young and old audiences, which provides a major programming challenge to radio literacy producers. Another important factor of European projects is close coordination and cooperation between broadcasters and other agencies. Worldwide experience suggests four basic models of radio ownership and control: commercial, public broadcasting, open access, and radio schools. The models have profound implications for the way radio is used for adult literacy. More published evaluation data are needed on the effectiveness of the radio schools in teaching literacy. In addition, world experience suggests that the use of radio for adult literacy must be accompanied by social, economic, and political reform. (NLA)

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ED329654

**INTERNATIONAL
SYMPOSIUM
OF
POPULAR LITERACY
BY
RADIO**

**Santo Domingo,
Dominican Republic
1 - 3 July, 1990**

**LITERACY BY RADIO:
LESSONS FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

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Introduction

First of all, it is a great pleasure and an honour to attend this symposium. I have long admired the excellent work of the radio schools of Latin America, and the leadership role played by Radio ECCA in the use of radio for teaching adults to read.

Since César Picón in another paper is presenting a Latin American overview of popular literacy by radio, this paper will concentrate on experiences outside Latin America. In so doing, I am aware of the major differences in language, culture and politics between Latin America and other parts of the world. I believe most strongly that while it is often useful to know about what is happening elsewhere, the most successful uses of broadcasting in education have been those that have identified local needs and have found unique solutions to meeting those needs. This is a major feature of the popular literacy by radio projects, and on this topic, it is the rest of the world which needs to listen to Latin America, rather than the other way round.

With those words of caution, I will try to condense a great deal of experience from around the world, by looking at the key issues that seem to me to be raised by projects that have attempted to teach literacy through radio.

Adult illiteracy: a world-wide problem

Adult literacy is not just a problem of developing countries. It is estimated that in Britain, which still has one of the most progressive and comprehensive education systems in the world, there are two million functionally illiterate adults, defined as unable to read a British tabloid newspaper, for which a reading age of seven is considered adequate.

Federal government studies in Canada have found that nearly half of all Canadian companies lose productivity and have to increase training costs because of problems of literacy amongst the work-force. These studies

estimate that 5 million in Canada are 'unable to use printed and written information to function effectively in society', and that 23% of the British Columbian workforce are 'handicapped at work' by low levels of literacy (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1989)

These studies indicate that in modern employment activities, the following basic skills are required in the work-place:

Reading and writing
 Numeracy
 Verbal communication
 Social skills (team-work, service)

The same publication also indicated that factory workers now need to spend 1.5 hours and shop workers 3 hours a day on reading to perform their work.

Thus adult illiteracy is not a problem confined to a limited number of developing countries.

A difficult target group

Of all the educational target groups, adult illiterates are perhaps the most difficult not just to teach, but to access in the first place. There are several reasons for this:

'Illiteracy....has been characterised by shame, embarrassment and concealment'

Hargreaves, 1980

Although not true for all adult illiterates in all countries, the inability to read is for many something shameful to be hidden from family and friends, as well as from work colleagues and employers. Indeed, many adult illiterates go to great lengths and show considerable ingenuity to hide their disability (as they see it).

Furthermore, by definition, non-readers cannot be contacted directly via print, so many of the usual means of communication and publicity are not appropriate for this group.

Perhaps most seriously of all, it is difficult if not impossible to reach many adult illiterates through the formal education system. In Canada and UK, 70-75% of school-leavers never return to any kind of formal education; and the one's that do are those that have been successful at school. For many adult illiterates, the formal education system represents failure and pain when they were young, and thus schools and colleges are to be avoided at all costs.

Unfortunately, even at work there is likely to be little help for those who cannot read. Only 15% of Canadian workers receive job-related training (mainly in the largest companies) of any kind; only a handful of companies are sufficiently enlightened to realise that productivity can be greatly increased by providing in-company literacy training for their work-force, although as labour shortages grow, more companies are beginning to realise the value of this.

Above all, many adult illiterates suffer from low self-esteem. They tend to blame their own stupidity, rather than lack of effective school education, for their inability to read, and often believe themselves to be incapable of learning anything, and certainly nothing as 'difficult' as reading and writing.

Radio and TV in adult literacy

Given the difficulty of accessing such a target group, and given that radio (and, when available, television) are heavily used by lower income and less educated people, it is not surprising that between 1960 and 1974, there were attempts in over 40 countries to use radio and/or television for adult literacy projects (Maddison, 1974). One of the first to use television was *Telescuola* in 1960, aimed at teaching peasants in Southern Italy. Its slogan was 'Non e mai troppo tardi'- it's never too late.

In general, the main role of television and radio in adult literacy projects in this period is graphically illustrated by the International Institute for Adult Literacy Methods, then based in Iran (1974), which reported that broadcast literacy projects are like:

'a military operation in which radio and television represent the artillery to prepare the ground for advance and the infantry (personal teachers) then move in to consolidate the position.'

The major use of television and radio for adult literacy in Britain was the BBC's adult literacy project between 1974 and 1979. This is reported in more detail in another symposium paper (Bates, 1990), but its main features were as follows:

- TV/radio were used primarily to recruit students/volunteers;
- volunteers tutored one-to-one with students, as well as in groups;
- BBC worked in collaboration with colleges/local government/and the national Adult Literacy Resource Agency;
- a new curriculum was developed aimed specifically at adults.

It is interesting to note that the BBC is developing another adult literacy project in 1990, as part of its contribution to the International Year of Literacy.

Another interesting development in Europe was the Dutch *Open School* (1979-80). This was an attempt to provide functional literacy via TV and radio. Programmes tackled common spelling problems and gave viewers and listeners information on where to go for more adult education. The programmes attempted to teach reading through 'adult interest' themes, such as home decorating, children's play provision, personal rights, Dutch politics, and the justice system.

Many more examples could be given. However, it may be more helpful to try and summarise these many experiences, by identifying some of the lessons that have been learned, and the key policy issues that need to be addressed when using radio for literacy (see Bates, 1984, for a full discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of using radio and television in education).

Issues for broadcasters

Can literacy be taught by radio or television?

Very few projects outside Latin America and Radio ECCA have tried to use radio as the primary instructional medium for literacy, although most projects have found radio (and television, where easily accessible by the whole population) essential for reaching the target group. Virtually all projects where radio has been used have supported radio with specially produced printed materials, such as student workbooks and tutor handbooks.

In general the main roles for broadcasting in these literacy projects have been as follows:

- raising *awareness* of politicians and decision-makers of the need for and benefits of adult literacy provision;
- *recruiting* potential students and volunteers to adult literacy projects, i.e. supporting face-to-face teaching;
- providing *audio-visual materials* to assist face-to-face tuition (animation, drama, etc.).

It can be seen then that Radio ECCA and the radio schools of Latin America differ considerably from many of the other adult literacy projects that have

used mass media, in that the radio schools have used radio didactically, as the main medium of instruction.

There are several possible explanations for this difference in approach. Many adult educators in Europe believe that radio, as an ephemeral medium, is difficult to use as a direct teaching medium, especially for teaching literacy. Also, European broadcasting organisations have generally been careful not to by-pass the teaching profession with educational broadcasting, seeing broadcasting as a supplement to, and assistance for, teachers, rather than as a direct substitute. This assumes of course a highly trained and effective teaching force, which cannot always be assumed in Latin America; even where this is so, it does not follow that the teachers are suitably trained or available to teach literacy to adults.

One or several audiences?

One of the main issues identified from experiences in different countries is an increased recognition that there is not a single homogeneous audience for adult literacy programming, but a variety of audiences.

One important distinction is between 'open' and 'closed' audiences. *Open* audiences refer to those adult illiterates who have not yet been recruited or who have not yet made a commitment to improve their reading and writing skills, but might be interested in doing so. This audience is more likely to be attracted by 'broadcast-quality', entertaining programming, but without being patronised; this audience requires re-assurance and confidence-building (via identification); it also needs information (where to go, what to do). Such programmes need to be broadcast at peak viewing times, and should have a general appeal beyond just adult illiterates.

A *closed* audience is quite different. These are adults already recruited or committed to adult literacy; this audience wants *instruction*. For this group, radio programmes must support and be integrated with other material, and adopt a more didactic approach. Although programmes for such an audience need to be made in a way that is attractive to them, the main interest is

intrinsic, determined by their desire to read and write. Another closed audience are tutors: they want training and re-assurance, which can often be supplied by using radio to share teaching experiences; tutors are also likely to want a more serious and didactic approach to programming.

There are also major differences in interest between different audiences:

- *urban/rural*: in many countries, the majority of illiterates, in actual numbers, are more likely to be found in the slums of large cities than in the rural countryside;
- *men/women*: the role of women in development is being increasingly recognised; teach the husband to read, and you have taught one person; teach the wife to read, and you teach the whole family;
- *young/old*: young 14 year old school drop-outs are an important target group for adult literacy, and a particularly difficult one to reach, because of the numerous other things that attract people of this age group. Programming that will succeed in attracting this age-group will need to be very different from programming aimed at older age-groups, who are more settled and stable in their lives.

A recognition of different audiences with different interests provides a major programming challenge to producers of radio literacy materials. One solution to this is to involve the target groups more in programming and policy-making, and to take deliberate steps to obtain evaluation of and feedback on programmes from the public.

Special curriculum or school equivalency?

One major difference between Northern Europe and Latin (and North) America is that in Northern Europe, adult literacy programmes are non-credit and consequently have a curriculum developed (as with the UK Adult

Literacy project) specially for adults. In Latin and North America, adult literacy is usually linked to school-equivalency credit qualifications (e.g. the *Madureza* in Brazil).

The advantage of developing a curriculum specifically geared to adults is that the content is more appealing; on the other hand, the award of credit may be more important as a motivator. The ideal solution is to develop specific courses for adults which receive credit that is recognised as equivalent to school leaving credits, even though the subject material may be different.

The decision will also be influenced by the strategic goals of the organisation providing adult literacy. If literacy is a goal in itself, the use of equivalent school-based material is less significant; if literacy is seen though primarily as a means of individual and social empowerment, the development of an adult literacy curriculum is likely to be much more important.

A key issue is what content will be of interest or valuable to radio literacy listeners. The need for basic *numeracy* is seen by many as being just as great as for literacy, especially in industrialised countries. In developed countries, basic adult education programmes and projects now tend to also include:

- verbal communication
- social skills (team-work, service)
- computer literacy
- individual rights and benefits: unemployment benefits, legal rights, education services, etc.

It is now becoming quite common to provide all these aspects of adult basic education in an integrated, common curriculum.

Collaboration with other organisations

Another common factor of radio and television literacy projects in Europe and a number of other areas is the importance of close co-ordination and co-operation between the broadcasters and other agencies, such as government agencies, colleges and voluntary organisations. Often this was not easy to achieve, but most of the successful projects involved a wide range of organisations, with the broadcasting organisation as an important but by no means the only player in a team. Again, this is a major difference with the radio schools, who tend to provide not only the radio programming, but all the other support materials and even the field support.

One reason why so many projects in Europe have been done in co-operation and collaboration with a range of organisations is because it is difficult for one organisation to provide all the expertise, financial resources, and field support to make the programme effective on a large scale and on a continuing basis. However, such projects also require a high level of project management skills, good team work from a range of people working to different levels of priority and commitment, and a willingness to share objectives, approaches and responsibilities with other organisations over which one has no control. Trust and mutual respect are essential, and in many contexts, this may be too much to ask for.

On-going programme or once-off campaign?

A number of radio literacy projects have been run as campaigns over a limited time period, such as the BBC Adult Literacy campaign. This enables a very high profile to be reached, with a lot of effort and resources concentrated in a relatively short period. The main problem is that despite large numbers reached, 'mass media' campaigns have hardly touched the massive numbers in need of adult literacy. Thus while broadcast campaigns come and go, permanent programmes are also needed, at least until school educational systems are so effective that illiteracy is eliminated. No country seems to have been able to achieve that yet.

What media?

While radio is still the only practical way to reach the poorest people in many developing countries, other media, particularly television and audio cassettes, are increasingly accessible, especially for group work. One difficulty of radio that has already been mentioned is that it is ephemeral. Listeners get only once pass at the material, so do not have the chance to practice. They are also dependent on being available at the time of the broadcasts.

Audio-cassettes, either as a recorded form of the radio broadcast, or even more significantly, designed to exploit the control and interaction characteristics of the medium, can provide a low-cost and powerful alternative to radio. Television can provide a more attractive way of recruiting adult illiterates.

- Increasing the range of media adds not only to the costs of providing adult literacy, but also to the complexity of organisation. Nevertheless, learners everywhere are becoming more sophisticated in their approach to media, and it could prove dangerous to ignore the possibilities of these newer media for adult illiteracy.

Learners: alone or together?

Does the adult learn on a one-to-one basis (e.g. 'On the Move'); or in a group (e.g. Radio Sutatenza)? Research shows that radio listening groups in the past tended to be more effective than individual listeners or groups without radio; however now that television is widespread in most countries, it too offers an opportunity for group activities.

Nevertheless, given the stigma often associated with illiteracy, radio still offers the opportunity for individual study; being alone hides shame. However, learning to read is a complex activity, and once confidence has

been established, learners may benefit by 'graduating' to group work. Once again, the relative importance of individual or group study depends on the context. If all members of a peer group are in the same position, group activities may be a more effective way to ensure not only participation but overall learning. A combination of individual study linked to radio programming, and group work linked to radio, cassettes or television, depending on availability, is likely to be the most effective solution.

Who owns broadcasting?

Experience from around the world suggest four basic models of radio ownership and control:

- *commercial*: radio frequencies are perceived as a commodity by governments to be sold to the highest bidder. While there are examples where commercial stations have worked quite co-operatively and flexibly with educational organisations wishing to use radio for adult literacy work, access can be very difficult and/or costly to negotiate;
- *public broadcasting*: e.g. BBC or government service: while the broadcasting organisation may have a heavy commitment to educational broadcasting, the broadcasting organisation maintains editorial control, and priorities are set by broadcasters. There is evidence that in some circumstances, so-called public broadcasting organisations are even less accessible to educational organisations than commercial stations;
- *open access*: e.g. Knowledge Network, Canada; EUROSTEP, Europe: these are educational channels which offer free or very-low cost distribution to any organisation or institution which wishes to use it, but the users are responsible for the design and financing of their own productions;

- *radio schools*; e.g. Radio ECCA: these are organisations which are educational institutions with their own, dedicated broadcasting channel, responsible for the provision of all services, including field support.

These different arrangements do not so much represent clear choices in terms of educational policy, but are more likely to reflect differences in the regulation and organisation of broadcasting in different parts of the world. However, they have profound implications for the way that radio is or can be used for adult literacy.

Conclusions

It is a pity that there is not more published evaluation data on the effectiveness of the radio schools in teaching literacy; if there was, it may challenge some of the basic assumptions behind the use of European broadcasting for adult basic education. However, it is clear from the above that educators usually have little control over access to or regulation of broadcasting services. Consequently, successful applications of radio for adult literacy depend very much on the particular political context in which broadcasting operates. The radio schools of Latin America have been very successful in taking maximum advantage of their own particular context. Other solutions in other contexts have had to be found.

Secondly, world experience suggests that no matter how successful the use of radio for adult literacy, it is not enough if it is not accompanied by social, economic and political reform. We have seen that in China, economic reform without political reform, and in Russia, political reform without economic reform, both lead to social unrest. Education is an essential component of social reform and adult literacy is a cornerstone of educational development. But it has to be part of an overall development process that encompasses economic and political reform as well.

Nevertheless, there is a limit to what any single organisation can do, and the use of radio for adult literacy is one important step on the road to a more just and equal world.

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ABSTRACT

Adult illiteracy is a worldwide problem. Illiterate adults are the most difficult to teach and to reach because illiteracy is characterized by embarrassment and low self-esteem. Given that radio is heavily used by lower income and less educated people, literacy projects utilizing radio were attempted in 40 countries between 1960 and 1974. The main roles for broadcasting in these projects have been to (1) raise awareness of politicians of the need for and benefits of program provision; (2) recruit potential students and volunteers to projects; and (3) provide audiovisual materials to assist face to face tuition. Latin American radio schools have used radio didactically, as the main medium of instruction, unlike other countries. There is no single homogeneous audience for adult literacy programming, but a variety of open and closed audiences. There are also major differences in interest between urban and rural audiences, men and women, and young and old audiences, which provides a major programming challenge to radio literacy producers. Another important factor of European projects is close coordination and cooperation between broadcasters and other agencies. Worldwide experience suggests four basic models of radio ownership and control: commercial, public broadcasting, open access, and radio schools. The models have profound implications for the way radio is used for adult literacy. More published evaluation data are needed on the effectiveness of the radio schools in teaching literacy. In addition, world experience suggests that the use of radio for adult literacy must be accompanied by social, economic, and political reform. (NLA)

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Perhaps most seriously of all, it is difficult if not impossible to reach many adult illiterates through the formal education system. In Canada and UK, 70-75% of school-leavers never return to any kind of formal education; and the one's that do are those that have been successful at school. For many adult illiterates, the formal education system represents failure and pain when they were young, and thus schools and colleges are to be avoided at all costs.

Unfortunately, even at work there is likely to be little help for those who cannot read. Only 15% of Canadian workers receive job-related training (mainly in the largest companies) of any kind; only a handful of companies are sufficiently enlightened to realise that productivity can be greatly increased by providing in-company literacy training for their work-force, although as labour shortages grow, more companies are beginning to realise the value of this.

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Radio and TV in adult literacy

Given the difficulty of accessing such a target group, and given that radio (and, when available, television) are heavily used by lower income and less educated people, it is not surprising that between 1960 and 1974, there were attempts in over 40 countries to use radio and/or television for adult literacy projects (Maddison, 1974). One of the first to use television was *Telescuola* in 1960, aimed at teaching peasants in Southern Italy. Its slogan was 'Non e mai troppo tardi'- it's never too late.

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Many more examples could be given. However, it may be more helpful to try and summarise these many experiences, by identifying some of the lessons that have been learned, and the key policy issues that need to be addressed when using radio for literacy (see Bates, 1984, for a full discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of using radio and television in education).

Issues for broadcasters

Can literacy be taught by radio or television?

Very few projects outside Latin America and Radio ECCA have tried to use radio as the primary instructional medium for literacy, although most projects have found radio (and television, where easily accessible by the whole population) essential for reaching the target group. Virtually all projects where radio has been used have supported radio with specially produced printed materials, such as student workbooks and tutor handbooks.

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intrinsic, determined by their desire to read and write. Another closed audience are tutors: they want training and re-assurance, which can often be supplied by using radio to share teaching experiences; tutors are also likely to want a more serious and didactic approach to programming.

There are also major differences in interest between different audiences:

- *urban/rural*: in many countries, the majority of illiterates, in actual numbers, are more likely to be found in the slums of large cities than in the rural countryside;
- *men/women*: the role of women in development is being increasingly recognised; teach the husband to read, and you have taught one person; teach the wife to read, and you teach the whole family;
- *young/old*: young 14 year old school drop-outs are an important target group for adult literacy, and a particularly difficult one to reach, because of the numerous other things that attract people of this age group. Programming that will succeed in attracting this age-group will need to be very different from programming aimed at older age-groups, who are more settled and stable in their lives.

A recognition of different audiences with different interests provides a major programming challenge to producers of radio literacy materials. One solution to this is to involve the target groups more in programming and policy-making, and to take deliberate steps to obtain evaluation of and feedback on programmes from the public.

Special curriculum or school equivalency?

One major difference between Northern Europe and Latin (and North) America is that in Northern Europe, adult literacy programmes are non-credit and consequently have a curriculum developed (as with the UK Adult

Literacy project) specially for adults. In Latin and North America, adult literacy is usually linked to school-equivalency credit qualifications (e.g. the *Madureza* in Brazil).

The advantage of developing a curriculum specifically geared to adults is that the content is more appealing; on the other hand, the award of credit may be more important as a motivator. The ideal solution is to develop specific courses for adults which receive credit that is recognised as equivalent to school leaving credits, even though the subject material may be different.

The decision will also be influenced by the strategic goals of the organisation providing adult literacy. If literacy is a goal in itself, the use of equivalent school-based material is less significant; if literacy is seen though primarily as a means of individual and social empowerment, the development of an adult literacy curriculum is likely to be much more important.

A key issue is what content will be of interest or valuable to radio literacy listeners. The need for basic *numeracy* is seen by many as being just as great as for literacy, especially in industrialised countries. In developed countries, basic adult education programmes and projects now tend to also include:

- verbal communication
- social skills (team-work, service)
- computer literacy
- individual rights and benefits: unemployment benefits, legal rights, education services, etc.

It is now becoming quite common to provide all these aspects of adult basic education in an integrated, common curriculum.

Collaboration with other organisations

Another common factor of radio and television literacy projects in Europe and a number of other areas is the importance of close co-ordination and co-operation between the broadcasters and other agencies, such as government agencies, colleges and voluntary organisations. Often this was not easy to achieve, but most of the successful projects involved a wide range of organisations, with the broadcasting organisation as an important but by no means the only player in a team. Again, this is a major difference with the radio schools, who tend to provide not only the radio programming, but all the other support materials and even the field support.

One reason why so many projects in Europe have been done in co-operation and collaboration with a range of organisations is because it is difficult for one organisation to provide all the expertise, financial resources, and field support to make the programme effective on a large scale and on a continuing basis. However, such projects also require a high level of project management skills, good team work from a range of people working to different levels of priority and commitment, and a willingness to share objectives, approaches and responsibilities with other organisations over which one has no control. Trust and mutual respect are essential, and in many contexts, this may be too much to ask for.

On-going programme or once-off campaign?

A number of radio literacy projects have been run as campaigns over a limited time period, such as the BBC Adult Literacy campaign. This enables a very high profile to be reached, with a lot of effort and resources concentrated in a relatively short period. The main problem is that despite large numbers reached, 'mass media' campaigns have hardly touched the massive numbers in need of adult literacy. Thus while broadcast campaigns come and go, permanent programmes are also needed, at least until school educational systems are so effective that illiteracy is eliminated. No country seems to have been able to achieve that yet.

What media?

While radio is still the only practical way to reach the poorest people in many developing countries, other media, particularly television and audio cassettes, are increasingly accessible, especially for group work. One difficulty of radio that has already been mentioned is that it is ephemeral. Listeners get only once pass at the material, so do not have the chance to practice. They are also dependent on being available at the time of the broadcasts.

Audio-cassettes, either as a recorded form of the radio broadcast, or even more significantly, designed to exploit the control and interaction characteristics of the medium, can provide a low-cost and powerful alternative to radio. Television can provide a more attractive way of recruiting adult illiterates.

- Increasing the range of media adds not only to the costs of providing adult literacy, but also to the complexity of organisation. Nevertheless, learners everywhere are becoming more sophisticated in their approach to media, and it could prove dangerous to ignore the possibilities of these newer media for adult illiteracy.

Learners: alone or together?

Does the adult learn on a one-to-one basis (e.g. 'On the Move'); or in a group (e.g. Radio Sutatenza)? Research shows that radio listening groups in the past tended to be more effective than individual listeners or groups without radio; however now that television is widespread in most countries, it too offers an opportunity for group activities.

Nevertheless, given the stigma often associated with illiteracy, radio still offers the opportunity for individual study; being alone hides shame. However, learning to read is a complex activity, and once confidence has

been established, learners may benefit by 'graduating' to group work. Once again, the relative importance of individual or group study depends on the context. If all members of a peer group are in the same position, group activities may be a more effective way to ensure not only participation but overall learning. A combination of individual study linked to radio programming, and group work linked to radio, cassettes or television, depending on availability, is likely to be the most effective solution.

Who owns broadcasting?

Experience from around the world suggest four basic models of radio ownership and control:

- *commercial*: radio frequencies are perceived as a commodity by governments to be sold to the highest bidder. While there are examples where commercial stations have worked quite co-operatively and flexibly with educational organisations wishing to use radio for adult literacy work, access can be very difficult and/or costly to negotiate;
- *public broadcasting*: e.g. BBC or government service: while the broadcasting organisation may have a heavy commitment to educational broadcasting, the broadcasting organisation maintains editorial control, and priorities are set by broadcasters. There is evidence that in some circumstances, so-called public broadcasting organisations are even less accessible to educational organisations than commercial stations;
- *open access*: e.g. Knowledge Network, Canada; EUROSTEP, Europe: these are educational channels which offer free or very-low cost distribution to any organisation or institution which wishes to use it, but the users are responsible for the design and financing of their own productions;

- **radio schools; e.g. Radio ECCA: these are organisations which are educational institutions with their own, dedicated broadcasting channel, responsible for the provision of all services, including field support.**

These different arrangements do not so much represent clear choices in terms of educational policy, but are more likely to reflect differences in the regulation and organisation of broadcasting in different parts of the world. However, they have profound implications for the way that radio is or can be used for adult literacy.

Conclusions

It is a pity that there is not more published evaluation data on the effectiveness of the radio schools in teaching literacy; if there was, it may challenge some of the basic assumptions behind the use of European broadcasting for adult basic education. However, it is clear from the above that educators usually have little control over access to or regulation of broadcasting services. Consequently, successful applications of radio for adult literacy depend very much on the particular political context in which broadcasting operates. The radio schools of Latin America have been very successful in taking maximum advantage of their own particular context. Other solutions in other contexts have had to be found.

Secondly, world experience suggests that no matter how successful the use of radio for adult literacy, it is not enough if it is not accompanied by social, economic and political reform. We have seen that in China, economic reform without political reform, and in Russia, political reform without economic reform, both lead to social unrest. Education is an essential component of social reform and adult literacy is a cornerstone of educational development. But it has to be part of an overall development process that encompasses economic and political reform as well.

Nevertheless, there is a limit to what any single organisation can do, and the use of radio for adult literacy is one important step on the road to a more just and equal world.

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