A MODEL PROPOSAL for EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT

Almost all educational television programs are produced in similar ways and they are usually thought to be produced that way. These programs intend to reach the students of any organisation or any educetion establishment, but their ratings do not match with the expected level. In order to increase the quality of these programs and to make them being regularly watched, people in education and television fields have to work in cooperation.

Key words: Education, Television, Educational Television Program, Script Writer.

INTRODUCTION

In Turkey, if we look at the general view of nationally produced television programs, almost similar type of programs are broadcasted one next to each other. This is also true for educational television programs. Approximately 15 to 20 minutes long programs, a faculty member presents as a repeat of what is written in textbooks... As television program makers we can say that, these are programs as with *"talking heads"*...

For a student or an audience member, we can ask ourselves how these programs will benefit to these audiences. How successful are they to meet the expectations of these audiences? Is the aim of the eucational television programs to fill broadcast time?... Respectedly, with the amount of money spent, labor, time; aren't they all becoming waste?.. These are the very first questions coming to mind... There were so far no answers from Turkey for these questions according to my research, so the answers are from abroad. People who are answering questionnaires in different countries have similar answers as these educational/cultural television programs do not meet their needs. Most likely, the same answers would came from a similar research in Turkey, too. Because, observations put these answers clearly. As a result, research findings concerning educational television programs provide these answers (Hızal 1983: 61):

- ➢ These programs are the results of limited world, society, educational views and knowledge of producers and educational professionals. In other words, audience expectations are not under consideration.
- ➢ Television do not provide appropriate environment for all disciplines and subjects.
- ➢ Script text is written by a specialist with limited television experience and there is limited cooperation between television producer-director and the writer.
- ➢ In approxiamtely 20 minutes, a lot of information is tried to be conveyed. Trying to say so many things result so little to say.
- ➢ It is hard to say what kind of educational aspects being aimed with these programs.
- ➢ Specialist on a particular subject does not actually write television script and director faces difficulties to visualize these texts. The only options are using caricatures, photographs, stills, definitons. The result is not an attractive one.
- ➢ If a composition is not equally balanced and if it is not addressing the concious of the audience it creates difficulties for the viewer.
- ➢ There is almost no chance for feedback. Viewers are passive. This affects the productivity of these programs.

All these issues create concerns over people in education who work for solving some problems of education by people who have serious expectations from television.

If we really want to have good, quality, educative and potentially effective educational television programs we better think for programs which create the need for watching. This is the issue that needs to be solved immediately. This problem does not only belong to people in education but to writers, producers and directors; even related organizations and establishment. Education television is like a bridge between mass media and world of education. Production of the program, presentation and its use will be the bridge which will be created by a team work (Cassier 1960: 163).

EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION

A General View

Television, with its capabilities of video, audio and motion, is a strong, modern mass medium of transferring information to mass audience in current age. It is like a Trıjan Horse with lots of surprises. Some people conider it as a time consuming medium with lots of fantasies and with no educational capabilities (Oskay, 1978); some conider it as *'dumb box'* and some consider it as beneficial with stating *'magic box'*.

Besides these two contradictory ideas, there are ideas which consider it as useful and helpful medium for education (Mc Quall, 1970: 182). Television can be used for supporting education, gathering attention, attracting direction, filling the blanks, reaching the masses, presenting the facts for both students and adults in terms of decreasing the problems of education. According to this, students are not in schools but in informal environments with totally different educational medium. This is television with all these capabilities in all households. In all aspects of education and teaching television is the widely spreading medium (Hancock, 1976: 11). Another fact research findings show is the increase of developing educational television programs after 1970s' (Baggaley, 1982:46).

Where is the problem?

At first, there needs to be found out where the problems are in current educational television programs. The answer has to be found out for this: What are the roles of educator –subject specialist (text writer) and television program maker? The answer depend of different experiences and view points of specialist and the television program maker.

Subject specialist puts everything on paper when tries to write a script for television Writing an article and a television script are not the same thing for specialist. From program maker's view point, whatever the subject is, having attractive programs for mass audience with limitless imagination is the key factor with using all possibilities of television.

Educator has a tendency to have effective presentation from an educational view point and want to limit presentation this way. That's why, professional directors would not agree on letting only educators decide on what needs to be presented and they find distracting to use too much visual and dramatic parts in them (Cassirer 1960: 163). Traditional way of using speaking...this is another reason for comformism.

Meanwhile, producer does not want to fit in the educational lines of educator. According to producer, television has its own codings coming from years of experience (Cassirer 1960: 163). Griffiths makes statements on using radio and television in distance learning methods:

> *"The biggest problem in distance learning with using radio and television is the use of these media inappropriate ways for gaining prestige. We are the real people grown up with toys and television is one of these toys"* (Hızal 1983: 58 from Clarke 1968: 203).

Subject specialist (as text writer) should keep an eye on what television requires and television program director should remember the principles of education to reach a satisfactory result.

With its limitations and possibilities, we first need to know why to use television for education... It is possible to gather two main subjects as educational and practical (Hızal 1983: 58). The aim of education is to give quality to human nature. Student wants to see the face of the teacher where he/she is not able to see from the books and the texts. Educational television provides answer to this need: Programs aim to particular audience parallel to formal education (Dale 1946: 363) creates practical goals. These courses are filled with other learning experiences as reading, discussion, problem solving, practice.

EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION PROGRAM PRESENTATION STYLES

Educational television programs are categorized according to their content and context (Güçhan 1981). Educational television programs fall under three parts :

> *Instructional Programs*: These programs present either a subject or a subject piece. They give information. Generally, a text prepared by a specialist or a specialist is presented.
> *Informational Programs*: Either a subject or a subject piece is given to the audience in a longer time period with indirect way. It expects behavioral changes and presented usually in documentary forms.
> *Motivational Programs*: It carries characters of first two programs and its content contains social problems with a dramatic structure, (especially with using entertaining element) audience is educated while entertained.

Considering the communication process, people provide their opinions and problems through visual and aurals or visual-aural symbols. Relating all these factors, George N. Gordon categorizes appropriate presentations for educational television programs (Gordon 1970):

> Speaking oriented programs;
> Visuals oriented programs;
> Dramatically presented programs;
> Combined forms.

Speaking oriented programs
It is the mostly used presentation form in educational television programs. It is used in five different ways: Direct Presenting (Straight Narration-Talk); Presentation with Visual Material Use; Presentation/Question/Answer;Interview;Table Discussion/Panel/ Discussion

Direct Presenting (Straight Narration-Talk): One or more presenter with no written content, effect, audio, video and other documents. It is also named as talk. This kind of a presentation can be successful with good narrative language and a good presenter. In other ways, speaking head can be distractive.
Narrative language in this presentation from simple to complex is understandable. Words and sentences are chosen to gather the attention of viewers. It is better to have them in shorter.

Presentation with Visual Material Use: It is possible to have more understandable and easier program with using visual materials in presentation. For instance, using blackboard... using colorful drawing on papers... There is no need to use complex colors and visual aids. Visuals provide more assistance compare to sound (Sarıoğlu, 1976: 96).

Presentation/Question/Answer: Targeted audience's direct response provides clarity and assistance in communication process. Especially, if the selected subject brings questions

from the audience it will be better for participation. Possible questions are also added in the script. Subject is handled with two people in the process of questions and answers with no video and audio added. To support the presentation, real like situations can be used. For instance,

> A little classroom can be structured in the studio and it looks like the real classroom environment. Student and presenter (teacher) are the main elements for the subject with using questions and answers.
> Presenter is only by him/herself and answers own questions with jokes. There are no students in the environment. It makes audience to join the environment.

Interview: Specialists', either in their own places or in studio, opinions are given with video and audio. Presentation takes place with this way.

Table Discussion/Panel/Discussion: In particular subject, we try to give variety of ideas to the audience. Good research, good preparation, good moderator, preparation time available, characteristics of participants (knowledge and speaking) are the key factors for gaining audience. Audience finds to see the ways of seeing different ideas on a subject.

Visuals oriented programs
Visual/Aural Presentation: Proposed subject for teaching is presented with the help of visuals in television's visual codes. Aurals are also used on visuals. Closer shots are used for audience attention. Slowing the pictures, repeats are also used.

Dramatically presented programs
Drama itself is a way of telling a story with expressing human experiences, attitudes and behaviors. Drama programs are one of the few which audiences like a lot. Drama, with its visual characteristics and easy to adapt to educational texts, is used in educational television programs. Educational subject and script are combined in a story. With this presentation technique, viewers' imagination, aesthetic expectations and intellectual capacities are motivated.
Dramatic educational program script writer needs to be aware of planning and research besides having knowledge of strong writing skills, theater, film and television. Dramatic presentation requires understandability. We have to be aware of importance of characters, events, style, the language we use, flashbacks, tempo and pace, conflicts, and their integration with each other.

Combined forms
All categories stated above or some of them are sometimes used together in a program. We call this kind of a use as combined forms. If a program is consisted of series, we may use this style. There might be some music in transitions for not to make viewers bored. Combined forms may sometimes result confusions in meanings and losens the concentration. If there are too many techniques used in the program, viewer may be focusing on the context pieces instead of the meaning. Integrated pieces in harmony strengthens the structure and the meaning of the program.

Production Elements in Educational Programs
Characters
Presenters: People who present the educational television programs... These are: 1. Specialist characters. 2. Professional characters presenting a texts.

Specialists, Speakers: Pepole who take part in discussion tables and in panels or they take part instead of professionals.

Artists: People who have roles in educational programs with dramatic structures. Writer puts them in the story with their phisiological, sociological and psychological characteristics. (To have more information on character development in dramatic programs refer to Akyürek, 2004).

Subjects: Subjects may have additional support on understanding particular subject as using some materials in particular stories. Wrong uses of subjects may also weaken the meaning and understanding of the theme.

Environments
Environments in the story can be used with characters and subjects within combination. They are used for program goals and program content. Its main use is to gather the attention of the audience.

Graphic Materials
To strengthen the understanding of knowledge specifically prepared materials are used. They usually built strong learning structure and enriches the presentation of the subject.

Other Visual Materials
Photographs, films and videos can be produced uniquely for the program or they can be used for it from other sources. They have similar use goals as graphic material do. The most important thing to look at is their appropriateness for content and the goal of the program. Just to have an idea of having different visual material may cause distractions for the viewers.

WHAT TO DO?

A Model Proposal
The presence of competition between television companies result the goal of high ratings from programs they produce. It is an industry with its dramas, series and other programs. Even in every program they make here is a team…
Programs do not only have to be interesting but they have to provide some kind of information with some kind of gaze. That's why, researchers, script writers, program developers, evaluators, creators and other have to work together…especially have to work together in understanding of program needs. Especially, educational television programs, compare to old days, require more and more team work for better results. They have to be the productions of teams. Program makers for educational television have to learn how to get rid of their own egos.

In proposed model, from the very beginning point to the end, from research to broadcasting, all the steps in production are important.
According to an idea, script writer can not behave like a novel writer because the text has to be developed by the producer, the director, subject specialists, researhcers and the rest of the team. According to this idea, program preparation team has to be consisted of two groups:

> ➢ first group is the scriptwriter and television producing-directing team which are responsible for preparation of the educational program.
> ➢ second group is the group of people consisted of subject specialists : psyhcologists, sociologists, educational technologists.
> ➢ presenters and characters are seperate from this groups because they are not permanent.

A proposed program type in the Model is A Multiple Formed Program consisted of various narrative elements. The Model is taken under consideration into 5 steps :

The first step: research
Target audience has to be analysed and determined in details. Program goals have to meet the expectations, needs, cultural background, preferences and characteristics of the target audience. That's why, research on target audience will make program makers' job easier (Kılıç,1985:40; Çilenti 1979:53; Alişan 1983: 59). Determining all variables

(findings) is the second role of the researchers. This kind of work will help the program development

The second step: program development
In this process, the most important element is script. Process of script development step in educational television, research group (psychologist, sociologist, educational technologist), subject specialist, television producer, script writer takes place in this pre process.

> ➢ Pre-research for the problem: Educator Works on the first text for treatment process. Starting from this main text script writer combines what researcher, specialist and producer have from their preliminary research.
> ➢ Hypothesis development: Writer starts for another research according to very first thought gathered from the group.
> ➢ Re-preparation and story telling of the problem: In this step, script writer puts the problem in story structure and writes the draft script as it can be appropriate to the medium (television, cinema, computer). Draft script is read in the group, scientific and aesthetic inputs also gathered. (Script writer's work principles will be underlined in the following).

In script's treatment step: Target audience/Program type/Program goal/Program length/Presentation style/Program content (planned subjects and their length)/Deciding on production elements related with audio and video, and Environments/Shooting-Editing-Narration/Production team/Production costs/Shooting plans are in consideration.

In all presentation styles, the main goal is to reach target audience in terms of understanding of planned information. What to be explained and what to be supported by materials are all in consideration.

Script Writer and Work Principle; Every script writer wants to reach his/her audience with his/her script. One of the main principles in successful communication: To give what target audience needs and use the appropriate language that they use... This is the planned part. But, educational television script has a unique writing style with the writer's special cognitive, emotional and psycho-motor skills (Cilenti 1979: 53). The path treatment of script follows:

> ➢ Results of findings and facts are assessed.
> ➢ Classify the findings and facts.
> ➢ Making generalizations according to facts in relation to their meanings and cause-effect views.
> ➢ Gathered findings and facts are used for educational content in relation to story structure and script. The more we put realities of life into program we gain more viewers for our programs (plays, stories are the creative works of people. People who have tendency to use their imaginations are now passive in fron of televisions. Communication is a two way interaction. We can not forget this!). Television program's proposed content or educational program's goal, principle and explanations are determined for target audiences's characteristics.

The third step: essential points in script writing
Aural presentation (presenter/artist), visual materials create video-audio and motion as television's motivators. These pieces in script are used as teaching strategy materials.
While writing a script; there are certain aspects which need to be in consideration for clarity and making things easier. These are:

> ➢ All pieces in learning process have parts. Using an appropriate piece is related to content of knowledge, content of subject and underlined pieces.
> ➢ The goal in educational television program is to keep attention high and direct where we want. Attention is a key element in effective learning. Being in the living

- experiences of the audience gather their attention. We combine these with communication elements.
- There are some barriers in communication process and that's why there are some methods used in presenting the content for the attention of audience. With this method, we keep the whole piece together. During the development process of script we try to keep audince concious clear. Instead of being into too much details, clarifying has to be the aim.
- Perception of audience requires simple explanations with simplicities. Language for the narration is parallel to this. Television's language is both aural and visual. Using them in a wreckless way cause too much confusions. It creates misunderstandings for the subject. We have to use video and audio for agreements with the audience.
- Having the program in an effective way is the key. Naive and interesting mathods can be used for it. But, they are not enough for gathering the attention of audience. We also have to use entertainment part of it. Exeggerating it causes problems, too. It distracts the goals and the content of the program.
- Today, content of education and work conditions of daily life show so many similarities and relations. We also have to built this relation (Aklan 1977; 12). Changing values and cultural factors have to be taken into consideration in industrilizing socities (Higgin 1973: 20). Writer adds an artistic perspective to this relation. This is an essential issue. Perspective has to be developed from a wider angle.
- Writer has to chose the language of the narrative carefully. It creates additional strength besides audio. Meanwhile, video is almost the main language for television. We have to determine how to relate video and the language.
- "Can education and teaching be visualized in relation to developing within the use of imagination within the frames of today's needs?.."

Educator may say 'no' to this question from its view point, but for an interesting television program the answer has to be 'yes'. Because, *"visualizing education also requires acceptance and approval of socities in our age"* (Tansuğ, 1982: 146). In every part of the history, appearance played important role. Appearance and visual with imagination also played important role in today's civilization; many research prove that today's world is a visual world. Especially, television takes the main part in it. But, educational television programs do not reflect the same indication. Reasons for this are all stated above. We need to enrich works in television with imagination and visualizations.

The fourth step: assessing pre-production script
Written texts are read by text readers (all stated team members given earlier). Dramatic specialities and educational content are assessed. If it is necessary, additional suggestions are supported. Educational television program manager sends the text to the writer for extra assessments and corrections. Corrected or previously confirmed texts are given to producer-director for shooting.
Resulting text/script resulting from combined work reflects the signs of cooperative work of educators and television people.

The fiftn step: assessing post-production program
Already shot program has to be tested with a group of target audience member prior to its broadcasting. According to their responses, there can be changes made starting from script itself. Program is made to be broadcasted.

CONCLUSION

For the future of the society, investments on education can not be kept low. Parallel to this, investing on educational television programs can not be kept low compare to other television programs. The money spent on, the labor, the time can be unique to these programs. But, broadcasting cycle for these programs take almost ten years, so investment is compareably very low. It is wrong to argue science, art and television are

all apart. Educational television programs needs creative, unique, conceptualized works in relation to aesthetics and artistic applications. In Turkey, using imagination and creative methods for educational television programs lack. Planned knowledge for the program has to be first researched, observed and imagined; aesthetically dimensioned. This is the first step.

All written are under the lights of years. Through cameras, they will be transferred to tapes with the desicion of director. This is the second step. The third step is using supportive materials for education and teaching in television. All these applications can take place at pre broadcasting, during broadcasting and post broadcasting phases.
At the same time, besides the target audience, approval from the society for our programs is a real value for the people who gave their labor.

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