

ing groups, offering students easy identity in more self-contained schools and departments. Thus the necessarily large high school will achieve a workable scale for its components, much as does the university with its specialized graduate and undergraduate schools.

Each high school district has its own peculiar governing circumstances. No single solution, no single building pattern will serve all. All can, however, arrive at the best solution, educationally and economically, by serious study of their problems . . . study shared democratically by board and administrator, by teacher and caretaker, by parent and student.

The architect's role in shaping the high school of the future is to contribute his experience in translating the physical requirements of *each educational solution* into a tentative work-

ing budget. Once the school system has evolved its ideal programs for the years ahead, the architect can show how each program can be fitted to existing plant economically, without sacrificing flexibility and functional utility.

His most important function is not necessarily the planning and designing of the ultimate buildings. It is in surveying existing plant in terms of future curriculum, and relating future building programs to the educational program.

The high schools that will solve their expansion problems most soundly are those that begin early to work out their changing educational programs, democratically, and update them continually. The building programs will then become appropriate to their educational functions, and the buildings noteworthy in their architecture.

Television Has a Part in Modern Education

MADELINE S. LONG

Radio and television are not merely aids to learning, states the author of this article, they are direct avenues of information and example through which a child learns facts or fiction, truths or half-truths, attitudes good or bad. Madeline S. Long is consultant in radio-television, Minneapolis Public Schools, Minnesota.

TELEVISION is a tremendously powerful medium for education, mis-education, propaganda and entertainment. Still, it appears that a great many educators are ignoring or are unaware of the current impact and the potential influence of television, just as many school systems have ig-

nored the educational possibilities of radio. At the same time, many parents and teachers deplore the amount of time children spend before the television screen. But we do not stop a waterfall—we harness it for power!

Do educators have responsibilities with regard to the use and content of

mass media of communication? Does television have a part in modern education? The writer believes that the answer to both of these questions is affirmative. Our responsibilities and opportunities take several forms:

(a) To develop critical evaluation, appreciation of good programs, and the rudiments of "good taste."

(b) To spearhead or give impetus to a widespread demand for better programs and for the support of excellent programs already on the air.

(c) To promote and make assigned use of satisfactory programs with educational value.

(d) To participate or aid in production of programs under skillful leadership, using the resources of a school system or an educational institution.

A few school systems took radio education seriously and profited thereby. Under the impact of television and thanks to the opportunities offered by commercial stations which still have unsold television time, a number of educational institutions are experimenting with educational television and, belatedly, with radio. All large communities will have television soon.

Teachers have usually been among the last to buy a receiving set. A survey was taken by the radio-television department of the Minneapolis Public Schools in June, 1950, after two local stations had been operating about a year. Findings of this survey revealed that forty-five per cent of the pupils had television sets at home; only fifteen per cent of the teachers owned sets. By January, 1951, the proportion of pupils with sets increased to fifty-nine per cent. There was at that time no significant increase in the number of sets

owned by teachers. Since the Minneapolis system began telecasting, and since the inauguration of coast-to-coast telecasting of great events, however, the situation has changed.

Guidance Depends on Knowledge

To consider the first point, development of critical evaluation and taste, how can a teacher offer guidance in these areas if she has neither seen nor heard any of the programs which children in the elementary grades are so eager to discuss? An article in *The School in American Culture*, referred to in the July, 1951, *Educational Screen*, poses a problem:

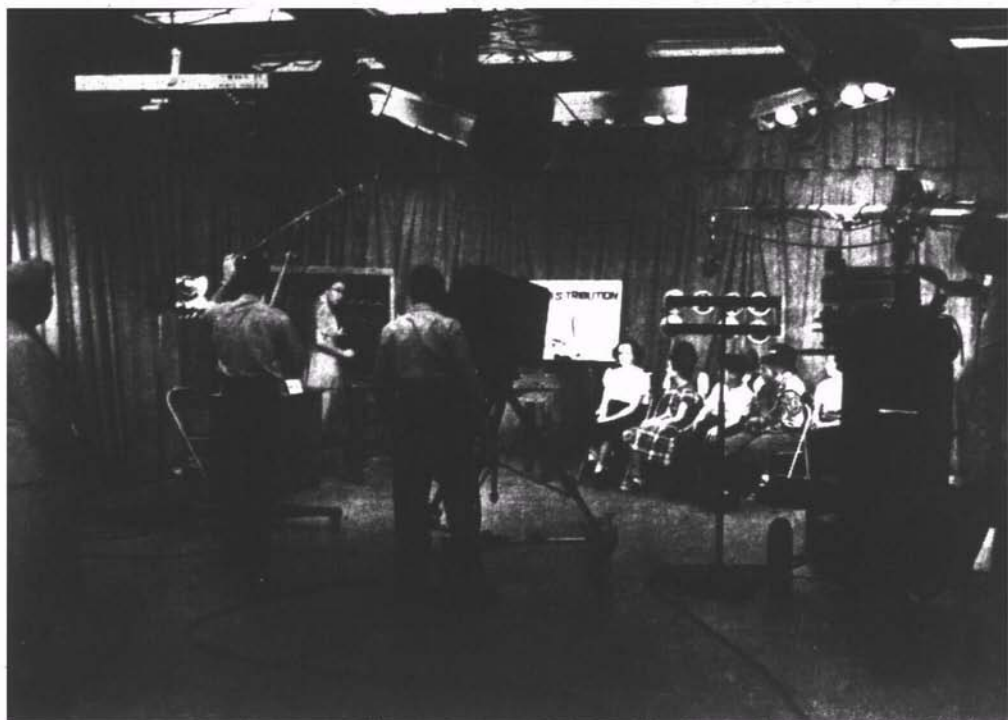
"The teacher . . . each year understands her children, not more, as she might reasonably expect, but less . . . This is the normal accompaniment of the fantastic rate of change of the world in which we live, where children of five have already incorporated into their everyday thinking ideas that most of the elders will never fully assimilate. Teachers who never heard a radio until they were grown up have to cope with children who have never known a world without television. . ."¹

In the lower elementary grades, city children wish to talk more about television watching than any other home activity. Unless the teacher is living in the same age as her pupils she cannot in any way guide listening taste or cultivate critical appreciation.

Persons of "Educated" Taste Can Be Vocal

The only way to get rid of murders, mysteries and vulgar variety shows is

¹ Margaret Mead, *The School in American Culture* (Cambridge, 1951)



*Minneapolis, Minnesota, Public Schools
A Willard School, Minneapolis, sixth-grade science class is televised.*

to help the public appreciate something better. Protests mean little, however, if the ratings show wide listener-ship. If an educated public would take the time to drop a card when the program is excellent, as well as when it is bad, much more might be accomplished to improve programs. Writing is a chore, but letters or cards gain more thoughtful attention than do calls. Still, a call is better than mere passive acceptance.

In addition to the telecasts of news and world events, there are some very good weekly programs on television. These can be maintained by the "voice of the people" or by a poll showing that there are sufficient listeners to warrant the station's continuing to carry them or the sponsor's continuing

to pay for the program. Many good sustaining programs have been dropped because the public has not indicated sufficient interest. "CBS Is There," later called "You Are There," is a case in evidence. Where is "Mr. I. Magination" (television) this year?

Who Determines What We See?

We must be aware of the fact that actually the sponsor and the advertising concern planning the program are more responsible for the fare offered than is the network itself or are the actors. However, the networks very often provide excellent fare on sustaining programs and try to interest sponsors.

Senator William Benton of Connecticut, speaking to the Senate recently

in favor of a bill authorizing the establishment of an advisory committee on radio and television, quoted a letter he had received from Raymond Rubicam, who had retired from the advertising business. Mr. Rubicam said, "Most of his (the child's) education comes from what he hears, sees, reads and does away from the classroom. . . Whereas many printed vehicles carry no advertising at all, in radio the advertiser largely determines what the public is offered in entertainment and information through his power of acceptance or rejection of programs because he is the sole source of broadcasting revenue."²

Educational institutions have a definite responsibility to keep informed as to what young people, and for that matter adults, are watching on television and listening to on radio. "The power of these media over the minds of men is illustrated through our attempts to reach behind the Iron Curtain with the Voice of America, Free Radio, and through the dictator's very successful attempt in his own country to teach what the dictators wish about the democracies."

Mr. Rubicam, remember, is an expert in advertising. Later in his letter to Mr. Benton he wrote:

"While much of this job (communications) will continue to be done by the printed word, we nevertheless face an age in which a higher and higher percentage of what our minds take in will be taken in through radio and television. Their danger is that miscon-

ducted they will make for a population standardized on a narrow base and a low level of preoccupation."³

If the public's taste is degraded and is being further degraded by some of the programs it sees, this is a matter of great concern to educators and to educational organizations and is cause not only for concern but for action. PTA groups, AAUW chapters and similar groups are doing an excellent job in some communities. Their materials are available to teachers.

Watching and Listening Can Be Assigned

The proper preparation for regular and frequent utilization of radio or television in the classroom is the production of programs which tie in with the curriculum or enrich a subject matter area. Such programs should be written and produced by trained personnel, whether members of the school staff or station staff. There usually are, however, some broadcasts or telecasts during school time which will lend themselves to good use by a discriminating educator.

History Today Lives on Television

It has often been rightly said that immediacy is one of the greatest attractions and values of television. The public demands telecast of events as they happen. While there may be a question as to the values derived from watching the crime investigations, there can be none as to the value of the telecasts of the ratification of the Japanese peace treaty. One such telecast was worth a dozen lessons.

² Senator William Benton, "Proposed Citizens' Advisory Board for Radio and Television," *Congressional Record*, October 20, 1951.

³ *Ibid.*

In addition to "history today" on radio or television, some of the more ordinary programs are usable in classrooms. For example, regular news casts can be used to good advantage in journalism, social studies and speech classes. A telecast like "Vacation Wonderland" has some educational value.

Out-of-school watching and listening can be assigned as palatable homework. High school teachers had the opportunity of using "American School of the Air" in school and later to assign it as out-of-school listening. They did neither in sufficient numbers for CBS to continue the series. "Mr. I. Magination," mentioned before, was an excellent historical program for youngsters and served to create desirable attitudes. I have not found it on television this year. "Mr. Wizard" and "Zoo Parade" are educational programs, with entertainment value, which have sponsors. Sufficient competition has developed so that drama on television now begins to be less amateurish and more professional.

What Do Children Learn from Television?

Many studies have been made to determine how many hours a day children devote to radio and television. (It appears that the average child spends more time beside the receiving set than he does in school.) A study has even been made of the effects of recreational viewing on grades.⁴ But I know of no published survey on the educational use of television or on the effects of television on attitudes. We must bear in mind that sponsors do not pay

fabulous prices for coast-to-coast hook-ups unless they are selling "soap." What are they "selling" with their products?

Radio and television are not merely aids to learning, they are direct avenues of information and example through which a child learns facts or fiction, truths or half-truths, attitudes good or bad. Freida Hennock, woman jurist and lawyer and member of the Federal Communications Commission said, "Television in the hands of capable teachers can be one of the world's greatest instruments for the elimination of prejudice and the creation of a higher standard of culture than mankind ever before experienced."⁵

Furthermore, children are prone to imitate Milton Berle or Ezio Pinza or Dagmar or Hopalong Cassidy or whoever the favorite television star may be. It is common for five year olds in kindergarten to name Milton Berle as their favorite television star. Berle is at best a very noisy, "corny" sort of comedian and at worst—well, have we as a people, or haven't we, progressed in appreciation of humor beyond the fabled custard pie throwing antics of the Keystone Cops?

Minneapolis Schools Use Radio and Television

We think too often, I believe, of better aids to learning in terms of materials, whether printed, on film, or on discs. *The best aids to learning are the active experiences of the child.* Educators can secure time on radio and television if they are sufficiently persistent and if they *know how to put*

⁴ *Of Children and Television*, Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1951.

⁵ Freida B. Hennock, "TV—Problem Child or Teacher's Pet?", *Education Digest*, May, 1951.

on interesting programs. A poor or dull program is of no advantage to anyone.

In the Minneapolis Public School system, we attempt to give firsthand experience in radio and television as a motivating force toward better use of language, both spoken and written; toward teamwork, a sense of responsibility and timing, and the other attributes necessary to putting on a successful broadcast and to being a good citizen. Over television we present actual classes on a smaller scale in the studio. In order to build and hold an audience, these classes must have visual appeal. Any program that could be done just as well on radio—the average discussion, for instance—is not for television.

While one of the primary objectives at present is to give parents a peep into the classroom, schools are beginning to purchase television sets and eventually these television classes will serve both for public relations and for in-service education for teachers and enrichment of the curriculum for students. A science class, for instance, in which a group makes a barometer or studies animals or does planting, will teach the pupils in a watching class and their teacher something new in that field. Pupils learn a great deal from seeing how other pupils conduct themselves. Teachers, likewise, may have the marvelous experience of visiting other classrooms without leaving their own. Some nearby teachers colleges have made use of this series.

The program content is prepared and produced by the various schools working with the central radio-television office of the school system. The station (WTCN) generously supplies

the technical staff and the station facilities. The Hooper and other ratings are good. Furthermore, during the period in January-February, 1951, when this particular series was initiated by the radio-television department of the Minneapolis Public Schools, hundreds of letters came in to the station and to the school system, approving the telecasts. A few quotations follow:

- "School on TV, it seems to me, has been wonderfully helpful in opening many new fields of interest to the younger school age children. The children have been enjoying learning what other boys and girls are doing and creating."
- "School is conducted so differently from years ago. That is something we all want to know—what is being taught today."
- "Surely there can be no better use for television than to prepare children and yes, the parents, too, for the advent of their school life. Your instructors are exceptionally understanding and provide an excellent example for the parents in their treatment of the children."
- "Each morning my little boy four years old says, 'Let's go to the television school now, Mama.'"
- "Our encyclopedia is in constant use as one result of your Video School."
- "Your program is the high light of the morning. What an oasis in the parched waste of crude burlesque and six-gun cowboys."

Television not only has a part in modern education—it may become the greatest vital force in modern education. To ignore it is to bury one's head in the sand.

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