



Research in Brief

Television and the Family

Any mention of control of television use by parents, adults, adolescents, or children must necessarily include the contribution of those who make the programs possible, namely, the television industry itself. By and large, parents expect the television industry to regulate and be responsible for itself. But network accountability is secondary to economic accountability, and this in turn very often supercedes program suitability to family preferences. Federal concern has been for the most part punting the responsibility back to the family living room.

Ten recycled principles for remedial reconsiderations and action in improving responsible television are:

1. That controlled television use in the family is a requisite for individual and familial growth.
2. That parents watch at least some of the programs their

children and adolescents watch and, in collaboration with them, establish rules and guidelines for the optimum use of television.

3. That open and frank discussion of television use, type of programs watched, and program content be encouraged by all family members, including marital units.
4. That children and adolescents are special audiences of TV consumers and, as such, merit special protection and programming responsibility suitable to their appropriate level of growth and maturity.
5. That parents have a major responsibility to communicate to their children their own judgments about taste, and attitudes toward television viewing, including crime, cruelty, violence, sex, profanity, and all forms of exploitation.
6. That TV programs that incorporate sadism, "crime for

fun" brutality as the basis for entertainment, "the portrayal of violence as a solution, and the picturing of details of crime and sadism that blunt feelings of compassion and humanity" not be allowed the privilege of being publicly broadcast.

7. That both the television industry and independent commercial interests bear and share in all of the above-mentioned responsibilities, with special concern for exploiting the young, and adequate consumer participation in the type and amount of programs decided to be produced and broadcast.
8. That the federal government, through its regulatory arms (FCC and FTC) also share in this responsibility with the power of coercing the television industry to conform to these principles.
9. That responsibility for improving the quality of television rests first with the broadcasting profession, second with commercial sponsors, third with family TV viewers, fourth with educators, and fifth with representative federal agencies.
10. That both the public and the television industry be educationally reminded that the air and airwaves are public property; that the privilege of using these airwaves is indeed a right given with

with corresponding responsibility expected; and that the implications of public ownership of television need greater identification, publication, and actualization for substantial broadcasting responsibility to be achieved.

"Television and the Family: The Question of Control." Vincent M. Rue, *The Family Coordinator*, XXII (January, 1974), 73-81.

C. Martin

Newsletters and Knowledge

Adult educators have a general interest in the use of mass media in education. Those educators with a specific interest in the use of newsletters should find the study conducted by Mazer and Brown useful. They measured the effectiveness of various newsletter mailing techniques in increasing knowledge among dairymen.

Procedure

The study population was composed of the dairy farmers in seven counties who attended a five-week clinic relating to herd health and management.

Subjects in the study were administered a pre- and post-test consisting of 30 multiple-choice questions. Dairy farmers in two counties served as the control group and didn't receive newsletters. Four groups of dairymen in the other counties were ran-

domly selected for different treatments (different newsletter formats).

Results

There was no significant difference in the knowledge gained among dairymen who received three newsletters at weekly intervals or those who received all the newsletters at one time.

There was a significant difference in the scores of dairymen who received the newsletter and those who didn't, with those receiving the newsletters receiving higher scores. The younger dairymen showed a higher gain in scores than older dairymen. Other variables such as education, other employment, years of farming and scale of farming weren't related to knowledge gained.

"Effectiveness of Cooperative Extension Service Newsletters with Different Formats Received by Dairymen in Pennsylvania." Homer F. Mazer and Emory J. Brown. Paper presented at the Adult Education Research Conference, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1970. [Order number: ED 036 771. Price: MF 25¢, HC 45¢.]*

H. Long

Adults Perform Better on Realistic Tasks

This study is important because of two major elements: the study design and the findings.

Data on adult learning have primarily described age differences in learning and performance as revealed on the kinds

of tasks performed in the laboratory. Little research has been completed on more meaningful kinds of materials, nor has much research been directed at an analysis of variables that might differentially influence learning and performance during different stages of adulthood.

The study is important because it partially fills the void.

One purpose of the program of research was to determine age differences in cognitive abilities with special reference to items selected as suitable for adults of different ages, to survey the educational backgrounds and skills that older and younger adults bring to learning situations, and to study age differences in personality characteristics of a type likely to influence the individual's learning.

A second main purpose of the research was to investigate experimentally the interaction of the variables mentioned above with the age of the learner in determining learning and performance.

The first important departure of the study was the development of 28 tests specifically designed to discern differential age trends among adults. These tests can be grouped in four categories: word familiarity, specific information areas, interests and experience domains, and adaptation of existing and available tests. The tests examined such areas as transportation, disease, medi-

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cal matters, slang, religion, and fashion.

The findings indicate there are age differences across the life span from age 20-80. Performance varies with different age groups reaching different performance peaks according to content.

For example, peak performance on work familiarity was noted at age 55 for males and females. Performance on the transportation test was about level from age 35 to 65 for males with female performance generally improving up to age 55 before declining to the age 25 level to 75 years of age.

"A Program of Research in Adult Differences in Cognitive Performance and Learning: Backgrounds for Adult Education and Vocational Retraining." Rolf H. Monge and Eric F. Gardner. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of HEW, Office of Education, 1972. [Order number: ED 059 471. Price: MF 65¢, HC \$9.87.]*

H. Long

Testing Leaders

The authors, looking at the effects of authoritarian and democratic leadership, conducted two studies involving four- and five-man groups, of male sophomores and juniors from the Air Force Academy. Both experiments turned up similar results.

The first study used 48 and the second 32 groups of 4 and 5 cadets. Each young man was issued an individual copy of

NASA's decision-making problem which entails ranking the worth of survival items for a ship crew stranded on the moon 200 miles from its mother vehicle. The subjects worked alone for 10 minutes and were then randomly assigned to groups.

Leaders of the groups had been briefed beforehand, half instructed to use an authoritarian style, the others asked to employ more democratic techniques. Within each leadership style, half argued for a predetermined correct ranking of the survival tools and the remaining leaders tried to sway their groups to the least accurate solution.

The highest accuracy scores came out of the groups with dictatorial leaders who were trying to push a correct ranking of survival tools. Interestingly, the two democratically run units emerged with comparable accuracy despite the fact that one leader was asked to favor the right ranking and the other a wholly inaccurate one. Leader opinion just didn't seem to make that much difference in the group's successful performance. Making the least accurate judgments of all were units led by an authoritarian person who was determined to shove false conclusions down everyone's throat.

In the authoritarian groups, members displayed considerable aggression and verbal hostility. Even when they were right, high accuracy dictatorial leaders generated harsh interpersonal clashes.

Authoritarian leadership seems to be most effective under conditions similar to those in the study—good leader member relations to start, structured task, and strong leader position of power. Task-oriented organizations that don't rely on personal rapport for achieving collective goals may hit the bull's-eye more often with a firm leader in charge. But if the leader isn't right, authoritarian-led groups would be better off using democratic consensus to make decisions.

Editor's note: Does the authoritarian leadership model fit any of Extension's voluntary group leadership roles? How do you teach a democratic leadership style to a volunteer? Does the authoritarian-type person tend to opt for an authoritarian style of leadership? What are the implications for the recruitment of volunteer leaders?

"Testing Leaders." Joseph Cammalleri and others. *Human Behavior*, II (October, 1973), 30-31.

D. Stormer

Six All-Black Towns Studied

These are the six all-black towns studied: Boley, Langston, Taft, Tatum, Lima, and Vernon. The population of these communities varies from about 60 people to more than 600. Some of the aspects included in the study are: the degree of self-sufficiency in the educational services, religious

services, social services, and economic services.

The study was designed to be action-oriented. Therefore, it's essential for the respondents' views to be clearly presented. Many studies have focused on the leaders of communities, but the major part of this study includes the data collected from the rank-and-file individuals in the all-black communities. The study deals with the problem of unemployment and underemployment in these communities.

The findings show that the rate of unemployment is as high as 25 percent of the available work force. Underemployment is indicated by the low mean income of the all-black communities—scarcely above \$4,000. This tends to be typical of rural non-industrial and nonfarming communities. It was revealed that no adequate supply of trained labor exists in these communities.

The findings indicate that leadership in the all-black communities is highly diversified. This statement is supported by a large number of individuals who were named by the respondents as leaders in the categories of business, political, civic, and religion.

Religious activities are important in the lives of the individuals in these communities. As an illustration, in three of the six towns, more religious leaders were named than any other category.

Social change has transformed previously rural farming commun-

ities into rural residential areas. Farming is almost nonexistent and the automobile along with improved highways enables 46 percent of the individuals to be employed outside of their respective communities. In other words, industrialization has had a profound influence on the pattern of living in the all-black communities.

"Socio-Economic Study of Six All-Black Towns in Oklahoma." Charles Allen Humphery. Ph.D. dissertation, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, 1973.

F. Richards

The Task Force Approach of Determining Community Needs. George S. Brooks. *Adult Leadership*, XXI (October, 1972), 114-16, 143-44.

The "task force approach," a modification of Irvin Sanders' "reconnaissance method," was developed to replace the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education's practice of conducting area conferences for community leaders throughout the state to identify problems and needs.

The task force approach uses a large number of interviewers (15-20 faculty and staff members for about 2 days) to determine felt needs from a cross-section of community leaders. Administratively the approach consists of five distinct phases within the community.

Phase I consists of initial community contacts to develop sponsorship, commitment, understanding, and support for the study. In Phase II, a positional-reputation sample of leaders is developed. Phase III involves task force interviewing and Phase IV consists of reporting back to the community. Phase V is a follow-up to develop the studying, planning, and action processes to meet identified needs.

The task force study is described in some detail using nine sequential steps. Reference was made to studies conducted in two Georgia communities.

D. Blackburn

"Taboo Communication and Social Change: Family Planning in Asia, and Some Suggested Modification in the Classical Diffusion Model." Everett M. Rogers. Paper presented to the Department of Human Communication, Rutgers — The State University, May, 1972. [Order number: ED 073 366. Price: MF 65¢, HC \$3.29.]*

Taboo communication (message transfer in which the messages are perceived as extremely private and personal in nature) tends to inhibit social change involving birth control in Asian and other countries.

Taboo communication can be facilitated by encouraging

widespread communication about the taboo message thus reducing its tabooess. Another strategy was relabelling the taboo topic with different word-symbols.

Problems involved in diffusion of family planning ideas are different from those involved in diffusion of ideas in other areas. The diffusion model on which most Asian family planning programs are based doesn't recognize these differences.

Family planning programs in Asia suggest two modifications in this model: (1) use of paraprofessional change agent aides — to overcome the barrier and (2) payment of diffuser incentives to encourage communication about a taboo topic.

Editor's Note: Might this not have implications for communication and change with certain ethnic groups and subcultures, and in other subject areas in North America?

D. Blackburn

"Factors Affecting the Allocation of County Resources to Area Specialists in Agriculture in Kansas." Eugene Ross. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1966. [Available from: University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. Order number: 66-13, 831.

Price: MF \$3.00, Xero-graphy \$7.40.]

The study investigated attitudes, and influences thereon, among county commissioners, selected members of county Extension executive boards, and five selected farm leaders toward recommending the addition of area specialist positions in agricultural subject matter in the Kansas Cooperative Extension Service and toward the method of financing these positions.

Data were gathered by personal interviews in 10 rural counties representing 10 areas of socioeconomic similarity. A 17-item, 5-point rating scale was developed. Scores indicated, among other things, the respondents' belief that additional specialists are needed.

Eight variables describing area specialist services (determining farmers' educational needs, on the farm assistance, "in-depth" schools on specific topics, and others) correlated significantly with the recognized need for more area specialists. Most respondents agreed that the counties and the state Extension Service should finance added positions.

However, most respondents disagreed with eliminating one county position to support additional specialist positions, which suggests that overall county positions will have to be increased.

C. Trent

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Unmet Needs of Adult Participants in Selected Textiles and Clothing Classes. Grace E. Keir. Master's thesis, Iowa State University, Ames, 1973.

Adult educators believe that effective adult programs are developed by identifying individual, group, and community needs. The identification of these educational needs has been neglected in part due to its complexity. Lack of knowledge of assessment procedures and lack of sufficiently refined instruments for determining educational needs has also hampered this process.

To identify the educational needs of adults in the area of textiles and clothing, a study was made of 179 women enrolled in beginning and advanced adult textiles and clothing classes throughout Iowa during 1973.

The questionnaire was designed to identify the needs in six areas of textiles and clothing which included: (1) construction basics, (2) construction techniques, (3) advanced construction techniques, (4) children's clothing, (5) selection and use, and (6) sociological and psychological aspects.

Respondents were asked to rank the 206 specific items on a 9-point scale with a range from "no help needed" to "much help needed." The two areas indicating "much help needed" were

construction techniques and advanced construction techniques.

Specific items rating highest included: (1) making foundation garments (girdle, bra, etc.), (2) working with fur-like fabrics, (3) working with sweater-knit fabrics, (4) working with lingerie fabrics, (5) working with suede fabrics, (6) making a garment by draping fabric on a dress form, (7) working with lace fabrics, (8) learning quick tailoring techniques, (9) working with sheer fabrics (chiffon, voile, etc.), and (10) working with velvet and velveteen fabrics.

Areas that showed uncertainty as to how much help was needed included selection and use as well as sociological and psychological aspects of clothing. More emphasis on these areas by the adult educator may help adults determine their needs.

If the adult educator is to plan effective programs for adults, he must assess the individual's educational needs of these adults.

I. Beavers

"Participation Factors and Educational Needs Associated with the Iowa State University Alumni Continuing Education Seminars. George H. Ebert. Ph.D. dissertation, Iowa State University, Ames, 1970.

An increasing number of college and university alumni are participating in continuing edu-

cation programs to keep informed and learn about new skills and technology. The alumni series presented by Iowa State University since 1966 provided data to study some aspects of public and contemporary affairs—liberal or “quality of life” education as distinguished from professional or vocational continuing education programs. The study focused on identifying the factors that determined or influenced Iowa State University alumni and their spouses to participate in the seven seminars investigated in the study.

In addition, the study measured the degree of satisfaction received by the participants and what participants did with the information or knowledge after the formal meetings had ended. Questionnaires were analyzed from 75 percent of the potential respondents or 287 of the 381.

The seminar participation scale in the questionnaire gave the participant a way to describe the degree to which various reasons influenced him to participate. Factors that influenced participation were:

1. Intellectual stimulation.
2. Escape from boredom.
3. A desire to serve others through intellectual pursuits.
4. A desire to enjoy congenial people and the university.
5. A desire to broaden a narrow education.
6. A desire to share intellectually with spouse.

In all factors, the average of the means for satisfaction received from participation was higher than means representing reasons for participation.

Women respondents expressed a much stronger motivation to participate in the alumni seminars based on intellectual curiosity than did men. College graduates also had the highest means for the reasons for participation on the intellectual curiosity factor.

The alumni and spouses expressed a high interest level in wanting to share in these educational experiences. “Couple involvement” might be an area for further study by adult and continuing education programmers, since the benefits through an educational experience seem worthwhile.

I. Beavers



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