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A Plan for Implementing Educational Television in the Seventh Grade Language Arts Program Anson Junior High, Marshalltown, Iowa

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A Plan for Implementing Educational Television in the Seventh Grade Language Arts Program Anson Junior High, Marshalltown, Iowa

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Abstract

This study was designed to determine a basic plan for the implementation of Educational Television (ETV) in the seventh grade Language-Arts program at Anson Junior High, Marshalltown, Iowa. Research was focussed on those secondary schools where ETV had been utilized for at least one year. The intention was to investigate those schools that were similar to Anson Junior High since their experiences with ETV would seem most practical.

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Chapter I

"That we are now afloat on a full sea of educational television is obvious to anyone who critically examines the evidence."¹ The 1971 Directory of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters listed more than 207 educational television stations on the air, and sixteen additional licenses for the following year.² Iowa is among the states taking advantage of this medium. The Iowa Educational Broadcasting Network (IEBN) has three transmitters beaming programs into central, eastern, and northeast Iowa. As a result, educators can now take advantage of the programs offered to strengthen and enhance their teaching in the classroom.

THE PROBLEM

This study was designed to determine a basic plan for the implementation of Educational Television (ETV) in the seventh grade Language-Arts program at Anson Junior High, Marshalltown, Iowa. Research was focussed on those secondary schools where ETV had been utilized for at least one year. The intention was to investigate those schools

¹Wanda B. Mitchell, "Television in the Secondary School," Instructional Television, ed. Richard C. Burke (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), p. 23.

²Ibid.

that were similar to Anson Junior High since their experiences with ETV would seem most practical.

From the research, it was hoped to find answers to the following questions:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of ETV?

How does the classroom teacher plan the utilization of ETV in the classroom?

How are secondary schools implementing ETV in their language-arts classes?

When implementing a new type of teaching strategy, the classroom teacher is wise to begin with a simple plan, then build on during the following years. Mistakes can be avoided this way, and corrections or adjustments can make for a better program. Thus, this study is not intended as a broad plan incorporating all of the units taught in the typical seventh grade language-arts program. Rather, it is a beginning plan for five units. Experience will help to direct the future.

Chapter 2

BACKGROUND OF LANGUAGE-ARTS PROGRAM

Anson Junior High, Marshalltown, Iowa, was built in 1958 to accommodate approximately 500 seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students. Twenty-three classrooms, a library, a swimming pool, and a gymnasium occupy the four-floor structure. Until 1969, the curriculum consisted of the traditional subjects: English, math, ^{music} social science, and general science as the required courses; art, shop, physical education, and music as the extra-curricular courses. Time spent in class was fifty-five minutes, of which the first thirty were spent in instruction, and the rest was for homework. A study hall in the library served as a place for students to go when they were not in class.

Then in 1969, a new type of scheduling was implemented, namely, Modular Scheduling. With it came several of the "new designs" for schools and education. The fifty-five minute period was changed to twenty minute mods, each class lasting two mods. Resource centers in the four basic subjects, language-arts, math, social science, and general science, replaced the study hall. When not in a scheduled class, students were free to study in a resource center or the library.

Perhaps the greatest change took place in the pat-

tern for class meetings. Instead of the traditional Monday through Friday pattern, a six-day cycle was implemented. During this cycle, students met for instruction in three different sized classes: "large group," 180 students; "lab group," 30 students; and "small group," 15 students. Each of the classes met for two mods. Thus, a student in language-arts, for instance, was required to attend one "large group," one "lab group," and two "small groups," making a total of eight mods of instruction every six days.

Although the types of activities differed for each of the subject areas, in language-arts, the "large group" was used for introducing a new unit, showing a film, or administering a test; the "lab group" was used primarily for writing; and the "small group" was used for discussion.

To assist the teacher, several new pieces of audiovisual equipment were purchased. Among them were a videotape recorder, movie projectors, filmstrip projectors, and tape recorders. No films were purchased by the school system; however, films and filmstrips from the Area ^{VI}Six Resource center could be utilized.

The seventh-grade Language-Arts program changed in many respects. The traditional "teacher-led" classes changed to a multiple method approach. During the "large group," such activities as student performances, movies, filmstrips, and guest speakers were very common. Writing experiences, spelling and vocabulary tests, completed and corrected by students, dominated the "lab groups." Student-led discus-

sions were very common in the "small groups;" the teacher served primarily as a resource person.

This brings us to the present year. Much of what has been described still remains; however, one main difference is the lack of the "large group" in the learning pattern. This has been discontinued as a regular meeting but can be scheduled following advance notice to the principal. The addition of another "lab group" each cycle makes it possible for students to yet receive eight mods of instruction each six days.

Chapter 3

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

An examination of the literature reveals a high degree of interest in ETV from those utilizing it and a certain amount of apprehension from those who are interested but haven't implemented it into their educational program. As with most new teaching devices, proof has to be presented indicating that students are learning more. Unfortunately, there is a lack of test results to reveal this. Thus, when the teacher is asked to justify ETV in the classroom, it is difficult to offer convincing proof. However, those who do use ETV feel that the advantages are many compared to the disadvantages.

First, when used properly, ETV motivates learning. Every day in their homes, children spend a certain amount of time watching their favorite programs. They are familiar with this medium and feel comfortable with it. It is regarded as a contact with a larger world of fact and fiction in which one can escape the routines of the duller life.³ When one contrasts this attitude with that toward the typical textbook or classroom lecture, the interest factor appears

³Wanda B. Mitchell, "Television Is a Big Bang for the Educational Buck," Educational and Industrial Television, 5:22-23, September, 1973.

very important. Even more, if students become involved in the preparation of programs for television viewing, an even greater incentive for learning is present. Dr. Richard Knudson, former English instructor at Oxford Hills High School, Maine, summed it up this way: "Television provides the hardware and strong motivation."⁴

Secondly, research has made the television lesson a much more comprehensive lesson than the typical classroom experience. The classroom teacher meets, on the average, at least five classes a day. Add to this the many responsibilities before and after school, and it leaves little time for research. The ETV teacher has none of these extra duties; consequently, he can thoroughly investigate his topic, getting much of the latest information on it. Dr. Richard J. Raecke, Network Education Coordinator for the Nebraska ETV Commission, stated it this way, "The master teacher stepping into the classroom through the medium of television offers a lesson which is well organized and which is frequently researched beyond the time available to the classroom teacher."⁵

Thirdly, the student will find out that like the teacher, he too will have a different role to play. It may be impossible to ask questions during the presentation, or

⁴Victor A. Schlick, "Teaching English with TV," American Education, 9:13-18, April, 1973, p. 15.

⁵Richard J. Raecke, "Instructional Television and Your School," Educational Screen and Audiovisual Guide, 50: 10-12, November, 1971, p. 10.

to have a point repeated immediately. A large amount of new information may be presented in a short time, and he realizes that he has to give his complete attention. In one high school, a typing class taught with the use of television was typing faster and more accurately than their equals in a regular class. One student's explanation for this was that when the teacher was present, the students relied on his smile or frown to tell if they were working hard enough.⁶ With television, the students have to give everything they have so that nothing will be missed.

Fourthly, television is frequently used to clarify ideas. Many of the television teachers are former classroom teachers. Because of the time and materials available to them, they can plan the program very thoroughly so that it is reasonably clear to all students. Other types of media such as slides, films, pictures, and recordings can be incorporated into the program to make it a very valuable learning experience. Hours can be covered in a few minutes through "time lapse" photography; demonstrations can be magnified.⁷

One would be amiss to represent ETV as a panacea with no weaknesses or shortcomings. As with other types of new learning strategies, it too has certain limitations.

First, it predetermines the pacing of materials. As

⁶Wanda B. Mitchell, "Television in the Secondary School," Instructional Television, ed. Richard C. Burke, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), p. 31.

⁷Raecke, op. cit., p. 12.

the program is being aired, there is just one speed for both slow and fast learners. Since this pace is constant, both are treated in the same way, the result being that the slow learner may become frustrated. The classroom teacher, however, can compensate for this during the pre-instruction and can clarify points that students either missed or did not understand, during the post-instruction.⁹

Secondly, there is almost no opportunity for verbal interaction between the television teacher and the students. At certain times during the program, the television teacher can ask questions, but the students will have to either write the answers or just try to remember them. During the follow-up to the lesson, the classroom teacher, once again, can emphasize important points or ask for discussion.

Thirdly, the television teacher has no way to observe students' reactions, and thus continues with the presentation even though some may have questions. Generally, however, this person has a fine record of classroom experience and will anticipate times of difficulty and confusion. His lesson will be planned accordingly. In addition, student and teacher evaluation of the ETV lesson can inform the teacher of his success in meeting students' needs.¹⁰

Fourthly, obstacles in scheduling are created. Be

⁹James H. Gaylord, "Utilizing Instructional Television," BULLETIN, Joint County System Instructional Materials Center, January, 1970, p. 2.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 3.

cause the ETV lesson is scheduled for a year ahead, the classroom teacher may have to adjust his schedule to conform with that of the ETV lesson. To counteract this, some stations offer all programs at least two, and sometimes more, different times. Also, the video tape recorder (VTR) can be used to tape a lesson that has been missed because of a conflict. These taped programs off the air can be used at a more convenient time.¹¹ Thus, the teacher is not as inflexible as it may seem.

¹¹ibid.

PLANNING FOR ETV

When the classroom teacher is planning to utilize ETV in his classroom, a number of factors should be taken into consideration to insure its greatest potential. To begin with, it should not take up a major portion of the pupil's day. Rather, it is more effective if used as a special kind of learning experience.¹² The lesson itself should last between twenty-five and thirty minutes, preferably in the classroom. However, it can also be shown in a large group situation in a gymnasium. Showing the lesson in the classroom tends to give the impression that television is a closer part of the total educational picture.¹³

Although ETV can be valuable to any class, it is used best where teachers welcome help and where the medium offers special visual advantages. Special techniques which are possible with television can aid in a clearer, more rapid learning for the student. An example of this would be the use of "time lapse" photography. One program can take a child from birth to old age, or one program can extend from California to New York.¹⁴ Thus, the classroom teacher need not use ETV for all units; just those where it will serve a spe-

¹²George N. Gordon, Classroom television New Frontiers in ITV, (New York: Hastings House, Publishers, 1970), p. 87.

¹³Ibid., p. 87-88. ¹⁴Ibid.

cial purpose.

The television lesson has three divisions: pre-telecast, telecast, and follow-up. The classroom teacher should plan what activities to use when introducing the lesson. For instance, special vocabulary should be explained. An example of this would include such words as fringe benefits, workman's compensation, and credit unions. In a literature unit, such words as setting, plot, and characterization should be explained. If materials are to be passed to the students, this should be done before the telecast. Adequate lighting should be provided for students who wish to write notes.¹⁵

could elaborate more in the important aspects of pre-planning

During the telecast, the classroom teacher should take an active and enthusiastic interest. It is not a time for correcting papers or other daily duties; rather, a position should be maintained where reactions of students can be easily viewed.¹⁶

The follow-up should begin immediately after viewing the program. A number of activities can be included at this time: a discussion or written assignment, a guest speaker, or a slide or tape presentation. Obviously, students' questions should be answered during this time.

elaborate

¹⁵Gaylord, op. cit., p. 7. ¹⁶Ibid.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ETV BY SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Secondary schools are implementing ETV in a number of different ways. Schlich described a plan for Oxford Hills High School in South Paris, Maine, in which each class was broken up into small teams of about twelve students. Each team selected a unit, then planned its work around it. These units could dramatize an historical or current event, or event, or even a poem or portion of a book. The teams worked out themes for video production.

At this point, the team was broken into smaller groups, each one having a different responsibility. One group wrote the script; one served as a technical crew responsible for lighting, sound, and video taping. Another group was responsible for such visuals as titles, necessary props, and background materials. Still another group provided the acting talent. These functions were rotated many times so that all students performed each duty several times.

After production, the groups met to evaluate the production. From this, the students noticed such irregularities as improper use of the language, or incorrect subject-verb relationship.¹⁷

Another approach was described by Bellin. A complete

¹⁷Victor A. Schlick, "Teaching English with TV," American Education, 9:13-18, April, 1973, p. 15.

language-arts course consists of sixteen video-taped lessons, students' workbooks, and a teacher's guide. A video-taped lesson is shown once every two weeks, lasting twenty minutes. A brief quiz in the students' workbooks follows production. Along with the quiz is a series of exercises in the workbook. These are assigned immediately after the television program and provide the discussion material for following weeks when there is no viewing.¹⁸

Still another strategy described by Lapota stresses the importance of the daytime serials in the language-arts program. In the beginning, students are asked to be open-minded relative to the soap operas. To make this seem more practical, the students are told of the many "intellectuals" who are fans of the many "soaps." Following this discussion, a comparison is made between good and poor novels, short stories, and poems. Thus, to reject soap operas because of the poor quality would be the same as rejecting all types of literature because of a few poor types of novels or short stories.

When it is felt that the class is ready, the students are told to relax and enjoy the episodes, but they are to make mental notes of certain characteristics such as the number of scenes, dominant themes, conflicts in plots, and subplots, and use of literary devices. After the program,

¹⁸Allan I. Bellin, "The New English - A Fresh Approach to Writing," Educational and Industrial Television, 5:34-36, March, 1973, p. 35.

discussion of these topics would follow.¹⁹

¹⁹Bruce Lapota and Margherite Lapota, "The Soap Opera: Literature to Be Seen and Not Read," English Journal, 62:556-562, April, 1973, p. 557.

Chapter 4

PLAN FOR ANSON JUNIOR HIGH

The utilization of ETV would take place during five different units taught at different times during the school year. These would include Guidance, Career Education, Literature Non-fiction, Literature Fiction, and Drama. Although writing and speaking skills are not listed, they would be incorporated as part of the total unit. Thus, Punctuation, spelling, or grammar skills would be stressed when the need arose.

In a program that includes ETV, some video-taping is necessary. An aid or a clerk could do this easily. The video-tape recorder should be taken out of the school, if necessary, to video-tape programs in the evening. This person would also be responsible for taping any IEBN programs during the school day.

The general objectives for ETV use in these units would be to provide appropriate television viewing for each unit, and to provide appropriate activities to support each lesson.

GUIDANCE UNIT

When seventh graders enter junior high, a big adjustment is expected of them during the first few weeks. Many experience a great deal of difficulty and frustration. This

unit would help students to make the necessary adjustment by showing where they can get answers to some of their problems.

I. Basic plan for unit (September, two weeks)

A. Specific objectives

1. Provide a smooth transition from the elementary school into the junior high
2. Help students realize who they are and how to help make the adjustment
3. Make students aware of daily problems and possible solutions

B. Pre-telecast activities

1. Inventory of student television viewing
2. Explanation for viewing IEBN programs
3. Topics to be considered after viewing
 - a. Getting off to a good start
 - b. Assistance with scheduling
 - c. Getting to know yourself
 - d. Differences and similarities in hair and clothing styles
 - e. Being compared with brothers and sisters
4. Call attention to new vocabulary such as ego, peer-group, modular scheduling

C. Viewing of the following IEBN programs

1. MISSION IMPOSSIBLE
2. MOST IMPORTANT PERSON

3. SOUND: OFF²⁰

D. Post-telecast activities

1. Time for questions
2. Discussion of topics listed
3. Oral reports or writing assignments
 - a. Interview with the principal
 - b. History of Anson Jr. High
 - c. The librarian and the library
 - d. Extra-curricular activities

CAREER-EDUCATION

Although seventh grade may seem somewhat early for students to be thinking of occupations, it is good for them to see the relationship between the material studied at this time and the field of work. Since it is impossible for them to visit a number of businesses, this unit would serve to provide information on this topic.

II. Basic plan for unit (October, two weeks)

A. Specific objectives

1. Assist each student in developing plans for future occupations
2. Provide insight into the different aspects of employment
3. Help students realize the relationship between their junior high education

²⁰Iowa Educational Broadcasting Network, Instructional Television Manual - Secondary, 1973-1974, p. 2.

and the field of work

B. Pre-telecast activities

1. Brief discussion of such topics as fringe benefits, group insurance, medical plans, salaries, sick leave
2. Topics to be considered after viewing
 - a. Personal satisfaction on the job
 - b. Educational requirements
 - c. Job promotions
 - d. Working conditions
 - e. The good employee

C. Viewing of the following IEBN programs

1. HOSPITAL PARTNERSHIPS
2. THE MANUFACTURING TEAM
3. PATHWAY TO CRAFTSMANSHIP
4. PATHWAY TO SELLING
5. IS A CAREER IN SERVICE INDUSTRIES FOR YOU?
6. IS A CAREER IN MACHINERY FOR YOU?²¹

D. Post-telecast activities

1. Time for questions
2. Discussion of topics listed
3. Guest speakers from businesses
4. Oral reports from SRA materials
5. Brief discussion of parents' occupations

²¹Ibid., p. 4.

LITERATURE NON-FICTION

If young people are to be our future leaders, then they should have some background of our nation's problems. This unit would serve to point out some of these problems and what is being done today to eradicate them.

III. Basic plan for unit (November, two-three weeks)

A. Specific objectives

1. Stimulate students to seek out and read the featured works
2. Stimulate students to read other works
3. Focus attention on some of America's problems

B. Pre-telecast activities

1. Brief discussion of contributions made by minority groups
2. Topics to be considered after viewing
 - a. Life on the reservation
 - b. Famous Negro athletes
 - c. Declining species of animals
 - d. Animals in their natural habitat
 - e. Coping with nature in Holland
3. New vocabulary such as essays, themes

C. Viewing of the following IEBN and Public Broadcasting System (PBS) programs

1. NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS
2. BLACK CULTURE
3. WILDLIFE PRESERVATION

4. MAN COPING WITH NATURE²²
 5. WILD KINGDOM (PBS)
- D. Post-telecast activities
1. Time for questions
 2. Discussion of topics listed
 3. Discussion of famous Negro or Indian athletes such as Jim Thorpe or Willy Mays
 4. Report from a game conservationist
 5. Book report on the book Of Dikes and Windmills by Peter Spier
 5. Writing assignment: Our Diminishing Wildlife

LITERATURE FICTION

With so many different activities to engage in, students sometimes fail to gain an interest in reading. The purpose of this unit is to do create a curiosity for books. The IEBN programs reveal only parts of books' plots, thus providing encouragement to read the entire story. Many students need this form of encouragement.

IV. Basic plan for unit (April, two-three weeks)

- A. Specific objectives
1. Stimulate an interest in reading
 2. Widen the student's range of reading materials

²²Ibid., p. 31-32.

3. Help students, through reading, to get a better perspective of themselves
- B. Pre-telecast activities
1. Survey of books popular to students
 2. Brief discussion of the use of fiction for writing a story
 3. Topics to be considered after viewing
 - a. Characteristics of good stories
 - b. Development of setting, plot, and characters
 - c. Relating with characters' problems
 - d. Young people seeking solutions to problems
- C. Viewing of the following IEBN programs
1. ALL THE DARK PLACES
 2. DURANGO STREET
 3. THE OUTSIDERS
 4. THE YEAR OF THE JEEP
 5. ACROSS FIVE APRILS
 6. THE FARAWAY LURS²³
- D. Post-telecast activities
1. Time for questions
 2. Discussion of topics listed
 3. Guest speaker, author, if possible
 4. Showing of the books in IEBN programs

²³Ibid., p. 21-26.

5. Writing assignment on the favorite story viewed in the IEBN programs

DRAMA UNIT

Many students enjoy the area of imagination but are limited in dramatic experiences. This unit would tend to expose students to different kinds of drama and thus present opportunities for experiences in writing, directing, and acting in such types as skits, pantomines, and short plays.

V. Basic plan for unit (May, two-three weeks)

A. Specific objectives

1. Make students aware of different types of drama - tragedy, comedy, and farce
2. Stimulate an interest in drama and thus be creative on their own
3. Make students knowledgeable in play preparation

B. Pre-telecast activities

1. Define the word drama
2. Survey of dramatic programs viewed on television
3. Brief discussion of the community theater
4. Topics to be considered after viewing
 - a. Essentials of a good drama program
 - b. The director's duties
 - c. Expressions and gestures displayed by actors and actresses
 - d. Activities behind the scenes

C. Viewing of the following television series
and film specials

1. BRADY BUNCH
2. ALL IN THE FAMILY
3. SANFORD AND SON
4. MARCUS WELBY
5. EMERGENCY
6. WILD KINGDOM
7. RED PONY
8. AMERICAN HERITAGE

D. Post-telecast activities

1. Time for questions
2. Discussion of topics listed
3. Oral or written reports on lives of
famous actors or actresses
4. Report from a member of the community
theater
5. Writing and acting of short skits

Chapter 5

EQUIPMENT AND STAFF

The following equipment and additional staff members would be necessary to insure the success of ETV at Anson Junior High:

- A. External antenna, \$35.
- B. Colored receiver, \$400.
- C. VTR unit, \$1800.
- D. Ten VTR tapes, \$250.
- E. Videotape playback unit, \$1600.²⁴
- F. Clerk, \$2 per hour
- G. Audio-visual technician, \$6500 per year²⁵

²⁴Harold Turpin, Media Specialist, Marshalltown Public School System, Conversation on February 1, 1974.

²⁵Donald A. Rieck, Director, Learning Resource Center, Southwestern Community College, Creston, Iowa, Correspondence Received on March 1, 1974.

Chapter 6

EVALUATION

The classroom teacher who is using ETV has the ultimate responsibility for helping the learner make the best possible use of the telecasts. It would seem very important that a self-evaluation would take place to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, and thus make the necessary adjustments. This could take place at the end of a unit, on a form questionnaire like the one listed below:

1. Did I create a physical climate favorable to television by providing:

- Adequate lighting?
- Suitable ventilation?
- Comfortable room temperature?
- Furniture arrangements designed to give maximum advantage in viewing and listening?

2. Was the television receiver:

- Turned on and adjusted prior to the telecast?
- Placed in the most advantageous viewing position?
- Free of glare?

3. Did I use the pre-telecast period to:

- Discuss the objectives of the lesson with my students?
- Present vocabulary and review the materials necessary to understand the telecast?
- Develop student interest in the lesson?
- Give the students specific points for which to look and listen?

4. During the telecast, did I:

- Set a good example by taking an active interest in the lesson?
- Observe students, keeping alert to reactions indicating a need for reemphasizing points made by the studio teacher?
- Lead responses when called for by the studio teacher?

5. During the follow-up, did I:

- Begin my presentation as soon after the telecast as possible?
- Give students an opportunity to discuss points of interest and ask questions?
- Give individual help and create learning experiences suitable to the viewing abilities of my students?
- Encourage independent activities related to the telelesson?
- Make assignments involving different kinds of study skills?²⁶

²⁶Gaylord, op. cit., p. 9-10.

Chapter 7

SUMMARY

Because our way of living is constantly changing, our educational system will also have to experiment and select the best possible methods for teaching the young people today. Educators have witnessed many of these changes during the last fifteen years, and will continue to do so in the future. If the relatively new innovation, ETV, continues to gain in popularity across our nation, perhaps we may see a much more positive attitude on the part of the students toward their school responsibilities and their learning capabilities. At Anson Junior High, Marshalltown, Iowa, this is the dream for the future.

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