



Education Is Power

By Thomas E. Willis,
Ph.D.

During the summer, we developed a series of columns on the pre-school and early school child. Enough interest was generated for more information in this area, and we feel that a few more columns should be written on the subject. From time-to-time we will present information on the pre-school child.

Language development starts at birth and continues throughout life. Parents need to be aware that talking to the baby or small child has various effects on the language development of that child. The impressions that the young child gets from the parents' voices will be strong and long-lasting.

Talking to a baby not only reassures him or her when he/she cries, but also gets the attention of the child. An adequate attention span is one of the most basic factors needed in the teaching/learning process. If listening is a pleasurable experience, this will encourage the child to listen and eventually to concentrate. It appears, then, that the first task in teaching the child is to speak to him in a calm, friendly voice. It may be that an impatient, hostile voice is the root of a poor attention span when the child tunes out the unpleasantness.

Vocabulary develops as the child listens to those who speak to him. The ability to recognize objects can be encouraged very early, even before learning to talk. In daily association with the child the names of familiar items should be mentioned to him. How will a child know that a fork is a fork unless the name of the items are mentioned repeatedly in his presence?

Toys, plants, items of clothing, kitchen utensils, furniture, domestic, farm and wild animals, insects, foods, tools, weapons and buildings are some of the types of items that a child can be taught to recognize at an early age. Casually mentioning the names of these familiar items will help develop item recognition.

The same principle may be applied to activities. Bending, walking, yawning, digging, sewing, painting and picking are examples of activities whose concepts should be developed at an early age. Concepts of space relations such as up, down, in, out, above, below, etc., can best be learned as soon as the child is old enough to understand the spoken word. These are concepts that the child must use throughout his/her life, and the sooner that they are learned the better it is for all concerned.

Efforts should be consciously but casually made to help the child develop an understanding of the world around him. If at all possible, the child should not get the impression that he being taught. In other words, more care and thought need to be taken in communication with young children.

Reading to a child helps to expand his vocabulary and to develop his attention span. Reading should be started before the child begins to speak. Start sharing colorful pictures with a child as soon as possible. Talk about magazine illustrations, point out activities and objects on television.

A few minutes spent each day in reading, talking to the child and making him the center of attention helps develop his self-concept, confidence and desire to communicate.

How does all of this relate to the child's formal education? If the child attends a pre-school program, he may be tested for the above concepts while in the pre-school. Testing may become a part of the child's educative process as early as age two if he is enrolled in a pre-school program. Tests used to examine children of this age are informal instruments that measure the child's ability to recognize objects, illustrations of activities and moods, and his ability to conceptualize. These abilities are so necessary in the total educate process of the child. There are also tests for recognizing a child's motor development, his adaptive behavior, his language development and his social adjustment.



Benjamin L. Hooks

FCC
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Top executives of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, its operating arms -- Public Broadcasting Service (TV) and National Public Radio -- were voted handsome pay increases recently, putting them among the high salaried figures in broadcasting where salaries in the top echelon can be very high, indeed.

Now I have no gripe against top executives or anybody else (I believe lower echelon employees of CPB, PBS and NPR also received raises, albeit some of these on a more modest scale) getting pay raises.

In these days of high inflation which entails spiraling living costs, periodic pay raises are essential to keeping afloat one's body and soul. Then, of course, pay increases ought to go to the deserving as a reward measure, no matter the extrinsic circumstances.

But I digress. My chagrin at, or better, concern with the pay increases top brass with CPB, PBS and NPR was voted goes to something much more fundamental and frightening in terms of public and educational broadcasting. Of the sixteen officials in the top spots of the three organizations with salaries ranging from \$35,000 to \$70,000, not one of them is a black person. They, along with their boards of directors, set policy in terms of programming, hiring, firing, upgrading.

On its face there is nothing unusual about the announcement that these top men and women in public and educational broadcasting are receiving substantial pay raises. The announcement, however, does serve to call attention to the unpalatable fact that in an agency specifically mandated by Congress to serve discrete audiences that commercial television and radio cannot serve, or will not serve, a lily white hierarchy is calling all the shots.

It is understandable then why minorities -- blacks and Spanish-speaking, particularly -- have complained so bitterly against the preju-

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dicial programming of public and educational broadcasting.

Before his death this year, Torbert H. MacDonald, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Communications wrote a strong letter to Ward Chamberlain, president of Washington, DC's public television station, WETA, in respect to that station's concern with the "ratings mentality." The station had declared it would not air Black Journal in the 7:30-11:00 p.m. prime time because "that part of our schedule is reserved for programs of wider audience appeal."

Said MacDonald: "I do not need to remind you that public broadcasting was not set up by the Congress to mirror commercial broadcasting. Public broadcasting is funded, in large part, by federal funds -- funds which has been significantly increased under P.L. 94-192, which was enacted by this Congress.

"These federal funds represent the commitment of all the people of this nation to developing a public broadcasting system which is responsive to diverse programming needs and interests.

While I am well aware of the fact that you must depend on community fund raising for revenue as well, I do not feel that this requires you to program according to ratings. Public broadcasting stations should attempt to offer a suitable blend of programming in all time periods, especially in prime time, when, by definition, more people are watching.

"As I look over your prime time schedule dated for week (March 8-13) as listed in TV Guide, I note the absence of any programming aimed primarily at minority audiences, yet you are licensed to serve a metropolitan area with a center city (Washington, D.C.) which is predominantly black.

This is not to say that some of your general programming is not of interest to black viewers, but rather it raises the questions of where your priorities are being placed."

It might be added that commercial television does a little better. But Commercial television is not underwritten by public funds.

In any event, it is my belief -- and others -- that if a station has broad community representation at decision making levels, chances are its programming will more nearly reflect the needs, interests, and conveniences of that community.

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT: MEDIA THRUST

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS by Kenyon C. Burke

We are often asked, "What ever happened to the Civil Rights Movement? Where is the highly visible leadership that we saw in the 60's? Has the movement just faded away, or has it merely shifted gears in the continuing struggle to combat racism and inequality?"

Spending a few hours with Pluria Marshall, chairperson of the National Black Media Coalition and Candy Miles, communication consultant, vividly provided us with new insight into these frequently recurring questions. A social activist in his own right from Houston, Texas, Mr. Marshall explained how the NBMC is currently engaged in the struggle for black media access.

The Coalition is the nation's largest minority media reform organization, serving as the umbrella for black citizens organizations throughout the U.S. Boasting 76 affiliates, the Coalition has generated 500 licenses -- renewed challenges to broadcasting stations whose programs and hiring practices exhibited racism and are unresponsive to the needs and aspiration of the total community. This startling figure represents 80 per cent of all licenses ever challenged in the history of the Federal Communications Commission.

In addition, NBMC's affiliates have negotiated many agreements with local stations, pressing for the upgrading of blacks in managerial and technical positions, along with enriching programming and increasing meaningful community involvement.

Making the communications industry more aware of its social responsibility in the area of equal opportunity is an enormous job in itself. For example, of Public Broadcasting's 266 TV and 173 radio stations less than half are required to report minority hiring data to the FCC.

Fortunately, with the prodding of the NBMC, and Inter-Agency Task Force will be set up by the House of Representatives Sub-Committee on Communications to deal with equal employment opportunity performance records of Public Broadcasting. The Coalition is also pressing to insure that the public interest is not ignored in the forth-coming rewriting of the Federal Communications Act of 1934.

The existence and activities of the Coalition provides us with further evidence that the Civil Rights Movement is far from dead. Of course, there are those among us who feel that unless you have rioting, demonstrations and confrontations in the streets, you no longer have a Movement.

It is refreshing and heartwarming to see the emergence of groups like the NBMC who recognize that the fight against racism, bigotry and discrimination, in many instances, has shifted to different battlefields and, therefore, requires new tactics and strategies.

We, therefore, look to groups like the Congressional Black Caucus and the NBMC with special skills and knowledge to provide us with leadership as well as the traditional Civil Rights Organizations.