

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

Instructional Television in Southeast Asia

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Philippine Studies vol. 14, no. 3 (1966): 460–470

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Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

Survey

Instructional Television in Southeast Asia

THE Philippine educational system during the past two years has witnessed the introduction of instructional television into its public and private schools in the Greater Manila Area through the pioneering work of the Center for Educational Television at the Ateneo de Manila. For almost a decade, this means of bringing regular courses of instruction via television into the classroom and uniting the efforts of both studio instructor and classroom teacher has been experimented upon in the United States. In 1962 the Ateneo Center for Educational Television was established, commencing with two significant projects: a) the Ateneo-Maryknoll Closed Circuit Pilot Project and b) the Metropolitan Educational Television Association's National Program of Instruction by Television in Secondary Schools.

The Ateneo-Maryknoll CCTV Pilot Project linked up six school units on the two contiguous campuses of the Ateneo de Manila University and Maryknoll College. Coaxial cable ran from the Center's production studio to two grade schools, two high schools and two colleges bringing both "live" and filmed courses to students in the classrooms.

The main teaching method utilized has been the team-teaching approach. This involves close coordination between the classroom teacher and the studio instructor. The team also includes the technical and production personnel who coop-

erate with the instructors to bring about more effective teaching-learning processes.

The establishment of the Center for Educational Television was made possible by the generous support of The Ford Foundation and two Ateneo alumni, Eugenio and Fernando Lopez. The initial grant of \$100,000 from The Ford Foundation for a Closed Circuit Pilot Project in instructional television included \$75,000 for equipment and installation of facilities, \$12,000 for personnel training abroad, \$10,000 for production aids, \$2,000 for evaluation and progress reports and \$1,000 for contingency and public relations. The other donation was a philanthropic contribution of ₱200,000 for renovation which transformed the cement-floored, hollowblock-walled, asbestos-roofed old campus kitchen into a two-storied, air-conditioned building with fully equipped and completely furnished studios, control rooms, graphics rooms, studio teachers' rooms, library and administrative offices.

While Ateneo and Maryknoll administrators were intent on experimenting with the new medium to help raise the quality of instruction for their six thousand students, another group of educators and representatives of broadcasting organizations and government agencies organized the Metropolitan Educational Television Association (META). This is a private, non-profit coordinating agency which provides instruction by television to some thirty thousand public and private high school students in the Greater Manila Area. META's initial project is called the National Program of Instruction by Television in Secondary Schools.

The META National Program received substantial assistance from The Asia Foundation. A grant of ₱160,000 provided for the production, processing and printing of a complete high school Physics course on kinescope plus the operating expenses for META's first year of operation.

META's National Program was a cooperative venture involving the combined efforts of the META, the Ateneo Center for ETV, local commercial television stations, and the receiving schools. Courses produced at the Center were broadcast

to both public and private schools in the Greater Manila area during unsold slots of commercial TV time.

It would be worthwhile to look back in retrospect at the preparatory stages of these two projects and try to follow the progress of instructional television in the Philippines. At the initial stage of development, the META depended largely on the Center resources for management, personnel and physical plant. Basically, their needs were the same, and varied only in degree. The first step required the orientation of administrators, TV coordinators and classroom teachers to the new medium of instruction. There was the added task of training the studio instructors who were now to be given the new and strange role of teaching before the cold eye of the television camera with the imagined presence of a class. Production demands doubled in the second year of operation. Research and evaluation programs were planned and preliminary informal evaluation was completed. Feedback and reaction sheets, achievement and attitude test results indicated increased student interest in televised instruction over traditional methods of teaching.

After two years of experience with both projects the author was given the opportunity to travel extensively and to visit various instructional television projects, stations, educational associations, schools, and broadcasting organizations in Southeast Asia, Europe, the United States and Latin America.

The theme of the trip was, "Instructional Television for Southeast Asia". The trip had two main objectives: to find out the status of instructional television in the major cities of Southeast Asia; and, to work out a plan by which instructional television could be systematically introduced into these areas. The following section will be a survey on the possibilities of introducing instructional television to the Southeast Asian region.

It might be well at this point to define our terms. "Instructional television" is used in a very narrow and restricted sense to mean regular courses of in-school instruction presented via television. It is understood that instruction is given

developed in this nation than any other country in the whole of Southeast Asia or around the world. In Japan, there is systematic and continuous educational programming. Emphasis is given to enrichment and supplementary as well as cultural programs. A small and insignificant percentage of the programming is devoted to strictly instructional programs, i.e., regular courses of instruction directed for classroom use. All educational broadcasting is under the care of the Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK), Japan Broadcasting Corporation. The NHK, a public corporation, not governmental nor semi-governmental in nature, is supported by fees obtained by the government from people owning television sets. This huge and efficient educational broadcasting organization is responsible for practically all of the educational television broadcasts in the nation which covers at least 80% of the country with its network.

The NHK educational production facilities are magnificent, their transmission facilities are widespread, and their newest building at the Olympic site is without equal. The total scope of NHK includes over seven regional central stations, thirty-five television broadcasting stations and eighty-five re-broadcasting stations.

Mr. Tadashi Yoshida, Director of Education of the NHK indicated the Japanese attitude toward instructional television when he stated that Japan does not need this type of in-school broadcasting, mainly because of its excellent educational resources such as buildings, laboratory equipment, audio-visual aids, and a steady supply of well-trained and qualified teachers. If these conditions prevail and this attitude remains then ITV will not be had in Japan for sometime to come.

SEOUL

No instructional or even educational television exists in Korea. There is a great interest among local educators to experiment with the idea, but no significant developments have yet been made in this field. Meetings with officials of the Ministry of Education indicated that some of its staff members had already received advanced training abroad in the related

field of audio-visual instruction and were equipped with general information on educational television. Sogang College is presently expecting two of its faculty members to return from abroad after advanced studies in the field of education and training in television. The interest of the educators in an instructional television pilot project was strengthened by the corresponding desire of the local Asia Foundation representative to consider these possibilities. There is real promise for such a project in Korea if sufficient funds are made available.

TAIPEI

Taipei for the past five years has done considerable work in educational television, particularly in enrichment-supplementary programming for in-school consumption. They have also produced one instructional television series in Science which called the attention of Dr. Wilbur Schramm of Stanford University and which was mentioned in one of his reports on communications research.

The work in educational television in Taipei has been fostered for the most part by two main groups: the Kuangchi Production Service and the National Educational Television station. The Kuangchi Production Service, directed by the Jesuits, is equipped with professional production facilities complete with video-tape recorders and a well-trained technical and production staff. Programs produced at Kuangchi are sent to the NET station for broadcasting, but the NET station transmission and production facilities are quite poor and really a mixture of various kinds of equipment from different stations in the United States.

The considerable interest shown by the broadcasting people in Taipei seems to indicate that if funds can be made available, enrichment or supplementary programming will continue on a larger scale. It also seems that at present the educators in Taipei lack information on the value of instructional television in terms of answering their specific educational needs and problems.

HONGKONG

In Hongkong, although excellent facilities for educational broadcasting exist and many educators are aware of its importance, there is almost total indifference to educational broadcasting on the part of the government fiscal authorities. Rediffusion Incorporated has a commercial closed-circuit system network running through the entire island of Hongkong and Kowloon on the mainland. These facilities are available to educators for their use even on an experimental basis. But they are not being utilized.

It is possible that even air-time on the new broadcast commercial television station will not be utilized by educators. The main difficulty is that the government does not seem to be interested in committing itself to any kind of educational programming which would require long-term planning, preparation, and large amounts of money.

The one ray of hope seems to be the genuine interest in instructional television on the part of a number of outstanding educators in Hongkong. These individuals are very well-informed of the needs and the means of going about introducing the medium into a given area. Since the government is unwilling to tackle this task, then perhaps these educators and other interested individuals could group together and form a private organization which could undertake a pilot project in instructional television.

SAIGON

South Vietnam, a nation at war, inaugurated its use of television in early 1966 primarily for two purposes: entertainment for military personnel and propaganda for civilians. The work is being undertaken with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education, the Joint United States Public Affairs Office and the United States Navy. Production of the television programs is carried on at the Movie Center which houses a small studio equipped with two new RCA cameras. Here entertainment and propaganda programs are produced and videotaped. These tapes are taken to one of the two U.S. Navy Constellations which fly in a parabolic pattern ten to sixteen miles southeast

of Saigon from six in the evening to twelve o'clock midnight, transmitting two signals to personnel in military camps and to civilians in teleclubs in Saigon and selected suburbs. No other type of programming exists. The distribution of all television sets is under the complete control of the government.

Whatever the outcome of the war in Vietnam, there will be no instructional television in South Vietnam for at least five years to come in spite of the preliminary preparations which are now going on. Although personnel are presently being trained in administrative, production, engineering and technical capacities, many of these men are drafted into military service soon after completing their training, and still many more are given a change of assignment whenever a new government takes over. What is of great importance to many Vietnamese educators is that a stable government with clear-cut educational aims and objectives, sufficient budgetary funds, and a suitable administrative arrangement be established. These conditions are necessary for the proper use of instructional television, and these conditions will not prevail until years after the war is ended.

SINGAPORE

The island-city of Singapore seems to be the most promising in terms of using television for instruction. Much careful planning and extensive preparation has gone into the proposed program of the Audio-Visual Department of the Teacher Training College. A three-phased program has already been planned. The first stage would utilize closed-circuit television within the TTC for teacher-training purposes by means of classroom observation of teaching methods, techniques and student reactions through television sets. The second phase would have the teachers using the television studio facilities for production training in preparation for eventual teaching on television. Finally, the third phase would call for using the facilities as a production center for instructional television lessons which would be transmitted to a controlled number of experimental schools. All these stages would be accomplished within one year and three months of the beginning date.

In the preparation and planning for this project full support was rendered by the Centre for Educational Television Overseas in London. Key personnel of the TTC were initially trained in London. A training expert from London was also sent to Singapore to conduct a training course for producer-directors and other members of the production team.

Again, if this project is given the financial assistance it deserves from the government (which seems to have sufficient funds to back such a significant educational development program) then instructional television should well be established in Singapore within the next three years.

KUALA LUMPUR

In Kuala Lumpur, the Ministry of Education through its Sub-Committee on ETV, assisted by two Peace Corps Volunteers who have had special training in educational television, and Talivishen Malaysia, the government television station, undertook a pilot series in Science based on the materials from the CETO "kits". These kits are prepared in London by a team of educational, production and audio-visual experts for distribution to countries just beginning to use television for instructional purposes for adaptation to their own pedagogical needs. The Ministry of Education and Talivishen Malaysia are now planning a second series for this coming year.

The greatest drawback in the development of educational television in Malaysia seems to be a lack of organization, of purpose and of direction. A few pertinent questions have to be answered: where is the project headed? What does it hope to accomplish? For whom does it hope to accomplish these objectives? Unless these things are clarified, the work will be meaningless. Definitive planning is necessary so that all those involved may understand that only with and under the direction of the Malaysian educators can the real potential of television in education be exploited to the fullest degree, for it is the educator and not the broadcaster who holds the real grasp of what television can do to answer the educational problems of any developing country.

BANGKOK

The educational television scene in Thailand is complicated because various groups are in control of education. The Ministry of the Interior is in charge of elementary education, the Ministry of Education directs secondary education and the Office of the Prime Minister oversees higher institutions of learning. All television is under government auspices but operated on a commercial basis. One example is Channel 4 in Bangkok, which is under Army control. All income from advertising goes to the Army.

The Bangkok Municipal School System has been experimenting with the educational use of television in cooperation with Channel 4. Enrichment programs total about twelve per month and subjects beamed into the classrooms include English, Music, Science and Social Studies. These lessons are put on videotape and are beamed to sixty-five schools which have been given television sets by the government.

Likewise interested in the educational use of television is the Ministry of Education for its secondary schools. Key personnel have already been trained abroad and preliminary plans have been drawn up while negotiations are going on with organizations such as the Centre for Educational Television Overseas, the Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Secretariat, and UNESCO. Stress will most likely be given to enrichment programs, broadly speaking educational or cultural programs, adult education and in-service training for teachers.

While the situation in Thailand is not simple, much intelligent interest exists and many preparatory steps on the part of educational leaders have been taken; hence, there is reasonable hope for progress in the future.

* * * *

It is the firm conviction of the majority of educators in Southeast Asia that the basic educational problems of how to develop an up-to-date curriculum and ensure a steady supply of well-trained teachers so that the rapidly growing student population can meet the demands of an increasingly technological world, can be helped by television. It is comforting to

know that these educators share one common understanding of the situation: education needs the help of television to meet its present day problems.

From the forgoing survey, it seems clear that Manila is the only city utilizing instructional television on a regular basis. Taipei has had some experience with at least one ITV experiment, and Singapore is at the point of beginning a 15-month pilot project. On the other hand the use of enrichment or supplementary programming has been very extensive in industrialized Japan more than in any other country in the world. Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Saigon have so far limited themselves to informational, dramatic and cultural types of programs directed to general audiences. Seoul will soon initiate an experiment in language teaching with the aid of a videotape recorder.

However varied their situations may seem, the problems confronting these educators are basically the same. There is on the part of almost all a lack of information on the main ideas of television as an educational tool, and about the sources of information and assistance available to those involved in using television as a medium of instruction. Another vital problem is that of financing. The question of where to obtain financial assistance to initiate even a preliminary study on the possibilities of introducing instructional television into a given area and eventually to establish a pilot experiment must be carefully considered, for rarely do we find educational institutions that set aside capital for such experimental investments however promising.

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