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## Instruction by Television in Secondary Schools

Florangel Z. Rosario

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## *Instruction by Television in Secondary Schools*

An experiment in the use of instructional television is the current project of the Metropolitan Educational Television Association, Inc. (META), a newly organized non-stock, non-profit organization within the Greater Manila area. META's program, known as the National Program of Instruction by Television in the Secondary Schools, proposes to discover answers to such questions as "Will teaching by television succeed in upgrading Philippine education? What are the ways of adapting educational television to local teaching conditions? Is televised instruction financially feasible?"

Since actual utilization of the televised series started only in August of this year, it is too early to speculate on its adaptability to the Philippine setting, its financial feasibility, and its effectiveness as compared with the traditional method. A rationale for its introduction would be the ever recurrent problem of lack of qualified teachers. Television seems to be the answer to this shortage since it does serve as a "multiplier" by extending the services of expert teachers to more students. The present educational system is aware of this acute need for any teaching tool which could multiply the services of our best teachers. Statistics show that our population grows by almost 3.4% yearly, one of the highest rates of population growth in the world.

Moreover, technological growth and its implications and the growing complexity of life increases the demands of students for more knowledge and richer educational experiences. It would seem that television teaching could meet this need for more and better educational resources through its ability to bring into every lesson a wealth of audio-visual resources.

Rev. Leo H. Larkin, S.J., in his *Manila Educational Program* has given an excellent justification for the introduction of educational television in the country. He says:

In the countries of Southeast Asia which are either thinking of becoming democratic states or are actually, like the Philippines, young republics, educational television can help provide the programs needed to develop a literate and intelligent citizenry so essential for democracy. In the countries of Asia which are all neighbors of communism, educational television can help to counteract the poisonous propaganda that is falling in incessant waves on their shores to engulf the illiterate as well as the lettered citizen. Because educational television can mean the difference between a strong or a weak school training, which might well decide the political hue of the Far East in the world of tomorrow, the Manila Educational Television program has been planned.

Fr. Larkin explains the choice of the Philippines, particularly Manila, as the site for the initial projects of an educational program as follows:

Manila seems particularly appropriate as the site of the program due to the intense interest in educational television here, the physical facilities available, and the well trained personnel on hand. There are in this city personnel who can plan, organize and operate this experimental program. Administrators who are

familiar with the use of television in education, TV engineers, technicians, and production experts are locally available. Manila educators want this instructional medium and are willing to provide their schools as "laboratories" for the experiment.

In August, 1963, six months before the organization of META, a group of top-ranking educators and broadcasters gathered at fortnightly meetings to plan the National Program of Instruction by Television. It was in these meetings that the project was forged to which the Asia Foundation subsequently gave an initial grant of P160,000. This is how the objectives of META were formulated:

The overall purpose of the program is to develop the use of educational television in the Philippines. It will begin by attempting to provide for the common educational needs of the secondary schools in the Manila metropolitan area. The project is primarily developmental in nature and will provide educators an opportunity to experiment with the new educational tool. The secondary objectives are threefold: *educational, experimental, and developmental*. The major educational objectives are to improve the school program by offering courses of instruction in basic educational subjects to all students, to increase the effectiveness of all teachers, to make experienced and expert teachers available to all students, and to improve the quality of instruction with televised demonstrations, enrichment programs, and regular courses of instruction. Its experimental objectives are to discover the assets, liabilities, and techniques of instructional television in the Philippine urban milieu. Its developmental objectives are to introduce television instruction to local classrooms, to determine practical means of extending televised instruction to all the schools of Greater Manila and later to urban areas and rural schools. The objectives have been framed with a keen awareness of the needs of Philippine education, a shortage of experienced teachers, and a felt need for better education. The value of the program may be considered in terms of its ultimate goal of raising the quality of education and increasing national strength. The project will start with secondary schools because there seems to be more common problems on this level than on any other.

The project has been conceived with a full awareness of socio-economic problems. As Fr. Larkin put it, "the project fits into the socio-economic program of the government which aims to raise the living conditions of the great mass of the people. This project aims to quantitatively and qualitatively increase the educational opportunities for all students in public and private schools. The medium is a help to the socio-economic program which can only be implemented insofar as an educated people will embrace it."

The educational development program is expected to provide the educators with an opportunity to take the necessary steps in the attempt to raise the quality of their educational offerings. In the words of the META proposal, "the program will provide for the educators a solid foundation on which they can later build: the program that private philanthropy and the government start will be carried on by educators... The program will provide educational leadership for all nations of the SEATO countries since no educational TV project exists in Southeast Asia today. Finally, it will strengthen the television and electronics industries of the Philippines."

META was formally organized in February, 1964 after being registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Representatives of the following organizations, some of whom were elected to the board of trustees, helped in the formation of META: Agency for International Development, Association of Christian Schools and Colleges, Ateneo de Manila, Bureau of Private Schools, Bureau of

Public Schools, Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines, Manila City Schools, National Science Development Board, Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities, Program Implementation Agency, Philippine Broadcasting Service, The Asia Foundation, UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines, and the United States Information Agency.

The administration of META is carried out by a board of trustees, its policy-making body, and an executive staff. The staff is concentrating its full attention on the transmission and utilization of 120 telecasts in Physics which are now seen on two television channels at different hours of the day. These telecasts, produced and kinescoped by the Center for Educational Television, are received by secondary schools around the greater Manila area. Kinescopes (16 mm. television recordings) have an advantage over "live" programs in that they can be reshown through different channels and at different hours of the day to meet the demands of varied school schedules. Another advantage is that they can be distributed to other parts of the country after they have been utilized in the metropolitan area. Rev. Francis Glover, S.J., of the Manila Observatory is the studio teacher in the Physics series. Fr. Glover meets classroom teachers utilizing the series at weekly conferences for previews and discussions. A research program will also attempt to discover conditions necessary to present outstanding lessons under local circumstances.

To date, the success of the project can only be gauged in terms of the enthusiasm and cooperation shown by school personnel of the participating schools. Earlier last summer, some one hundred fifty administrators, classroom teachers and television coordinators went through a seminar-workshop on the broader aspects of instructional television particularly in the utilization of the lessons.

While immediate plans for the project envisions sending courses to places with large in-school populations having television stations, horizontal expansion is planned for other areas such as Bacolod, Iloilo, Baguio, Cebu, and Davao. Vertical expansion will include programming for the elementary and collegiate levels of instruction.

Although the people behind the project are fully aware that local conditions are different from those abroad, they are also quick to recognize television's potentialities in education as proven by previous researches, using the latter as frames of reference for present planning. For instance, research studies show that television teaching has been most successful in providing richer educational experiences than had been possible before and that it has proved to be an invaluable means of improving the in-service training of teachers. Because of the careful planning which goes into every televised lesson, television teachers found they could cover much more

ground and in less time than they could by the traditional method. Another added advantage is that it obviates the necessity of too much repetitive teaching and insures the presentation of the same material to all students.

Of course television teaching has its limitations too. Critics are quick to note that television is a one-way medium of communication in which students have no personal contact with the teacher. Others say that learning might be reduced to a passive experience in which "the student merely soaked up what was presented by way of a flickering image on a screen." There are also problems which result from a fixed scheduling. But on the whole, the advantages of TV teaching seem to outweigh all these limitations. Also, it is very likely that television teaching or any tool of the 20th century which could provide the need for richer and more educational resources as well as expert manpower in the nation's teaching force would be a welcome innovation.

The National Program of Instruction by Television in the Secondary Schools, META's present project, has started. While it is at present primarily a coordinating body, there are hopeful signs that it might develop into a much more active body encompassing more functions than what it has at present. Possible directions for expansion now would seem to be towards cities with television stations and perhaps later to other places that may be reached by the television signal. Perhaps it might develop into an educational station, community-owned or government-subsidized. But all these plans are dependent on whether educators, parents, and everyone concerned about the educational state of our country want it. It can succeed only if it has the full support of educators and planners of our country's socio-economic and cultural growth.

FLORANGEL Z. ROSARIO