

Instructional television: a technology for the classroom

By DEBBIE WASSERMAN BILOWIT

The watchword for education these days seems to be "technology." Teachers and other educators throughout the country are flocking to seminars and conferences with the word "technology" in their titles.

Schools are being deluged with computer and videodisc salesmen. Nearly everyone in the field of education is suddenly facing a mailbox full of literature about ways in which they can computerize their records, their curriculum and their teaching style.

It's awe inspiring, and indeed computers and videodiscs constitute a formidable and potentially mind-boggling revolution in education. And yet, while the world of computers is making a loud splash in educational circles, there is a form of technology which is more quietly, but as effectively, providing teachers across the country with an educationally sound, valuable and easily accessible resource.

It is called "instructional television" and nearly all of the public television stations in the country provide it at some time during the school day as part of their regular broadcast schedules. What's more, public television has been doing that for years.

Instructional television isn't a dull academic teacher standing in front of a blackboard lecturing to an unseen audience; and it isn't an hour of entertainment that bears no, or little, relationship to the sub-

jects being taught in the class.

But instructional television can be: a documentary; an animated series; a visit to another country; a demonstration of the latest scientific inventions; a dramatization about teenage problems; a close up, microscopic look at amoeba or insects.

Instructional television is always: brief (programs may be five minutes to a half hour long to fit into the class period); designed by curriculum specialists; tested in classrooms; accompanied by teacher materials which describe the programs and provide preparation and follow up suggestions; designed with the assumption that a classroom teacher will follow-up the material or information in the classroom.

How can a teacher begin to use instructional television in his or her classroom? Local public television stations can provide copies of their broadcast schedule and information on how to get a teachers' guide. (Usually, both schedule and guides for the entire year are available in August or early September.)

Then, the series or individual programs which fit into a particular curriculum can be selected. Teachers should remember that television should only be viewed as a part of a total learning system: They should prepare the students for television viewing with a discussion or activity, give them a purpose or goal in viewing the program, and follow up viewing with another discussion or activity.

Also, the Education Division of the local public televi-

sion station may conduct seminars, workshops or presentations for teacher groups to introduce them to instructional television. WNET-13 in New York, for example, has a whole host of seminars, including *Using and Choosing Technology*, *Critical Television Viewing*, *Television Production and Using Television to Teach Family Life Skills*.

This kind of television technology is intended to be a resource, not a substitute for the teacher — to do something the teacher cannot. It can motivate students, provide the teacher background information or provide the students with a first hand visual experience they might not otherwise have.

Here are some examples: Miss Jones teaches a class of reluctant readers. No matter what she does, she can't seem to excite the children to explore reading on their own. One day she discovers a 15 minute television series called *Storybound* and watches it with her students.

In the program, a storyteller relates a few scenes from a popular book while drawing pictures to accompany the story. Upon reaching a suspenseful moment, he stops and suggests that the viewers read the book themselves.

The class discusses the book and Miss Jones hands out several copies to some of the students. (The Teachers' Guide which she had borrowed from a fellow teacher forwarded her of the title of the book to be presented that day on the television series.)

Once a week for the next four months, the class watches

Storybound. And by the end of the semester, nearly all of the students are visiting the library on their own, selecting books to read in their spare time, and enthusiastically discussing and exchanging their favorites.

The Grover Cleveland Middle School in New England had just suffered a budget cut. Field trips have been eliminated from the curriculum. How will the teachers expose their students to some of the fine historic places in their area?

The instructional television series *Timely Places* will take their students to Sturbridge Village and Cooperstown. It may well be the next best thing to being there.

Mr. Allen is a physics teacher with a full curriculum load. His problem is to find ways in which he can introduce his students, quickly and effectively, to basic physics concepts as a first step towards the presentation of more complex problem solving activities. *Eureka* is a series of 20 five-minute entertaining animated programs which can do just that.

Instructional television programs cover a wide range of curricular areas. They can teach French, help children understand themselves, explore historical events, delve into Black history or the depiction of Native Americans in the media. They clarify mathematical concepts and they take a critical look at new technologies and their role in society.

Most public television stations broadcast instructional television programs during the school day and usually more

than once in the course of a week. Teachers can either watch them during the day while they are being broadcast, or record them for viewing later. (Local public television will advise on rights.)

And, because these programs are usually part of a public television station's regular over the air, accessible to all, broadcast schedule, parents and children at home can watch them as well.

Finally, talk back to the television set. Viewers can have a direct say in the creation of the instructional television program schedule.

Most public television stations which broadcast instructional television have in place a teacher evaluation system. They solicit teachers' opinions of the programs watched regularly, those which were viewed only once and those which are on the boards for next year.

In fact, at the end of November or early in December, many stations broadcast a sampling of new programs under consideration for next year and ask viewers and teachers to vote for their favorites.

Instructional television is a teaching resource, designed for and by teachers. But best of all, it is a technology that everyone can understand. There is no need to wait for it or learn how to use it. It's at everyone's fingertips. Just tune in.

Debbie Wasserman Bilowit is Manager of Educational Services for WNET-13, New York's Public Television Station.

USING THE NEWSPAPER TO IMPROVE READING SKILLS

What's black and white and read all over—and an inexpensive resource that parents can use at home to help their children practice reading skills? The newspaper!

Reading the newspaper can be both entertaining and informative for youngsters, and it can help them improve their reading skills at the same time, says a new parent brochure published by the International

Reading Association.

"You Can Help Your Child in Reading by Using the Newspaper" contains a wealth of ideas that parents can use to stimulate their children's interest in reading.

Written by Dr. Nicholas P. Criscuolo, supervisor of reading for the New Haven, Connecticut Public Schools and member of the IRA Board of Directors, the brochure gives parents a variety of tips for using the newspaper with youngsters.

It also lists seven specific activities that appeal to a wide variety of ages.

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Crafty women enjoy chance

Crafty women across the country are getting free craft instruction and discovering an exciting new career opportunity. It's all happening at Crafting Bees, craft demonstrations developed by Artcraft Concepts of Ballston Spa, New York.

A modern treatment of the traditional quilting bee, these Crafting Bees offer guests the chance to learn a variety of craft techniques free of charge. And, they offer the women who act as counselors a unique career opportunity that allows them to earn substantial income and recognition in a way that's fully compatible with their lifestyles.

Expert counselors conduct the bees, providing free in-

struction in the latest craft techniques as well as a broad line of designer original crafts to their guests. A typical Crafting Bee includes instruction in two or three crafts selected by the hostess.

In return for inviting her friends and neighbors to her home, the hostess receives free crafts, any item of her choice at half price, and the opportunity to take advantage of numerous special offers.

Career opportunity

The real winners, however, are the company's counselors. Counselors work 12 hours a week, setting their hours as they wish, and can earn \$40-\$80 for the two or three hours each Crafting Bee requires.

How many crafting bees each counselor conducts each week is unlimited — as are, therefore, her earnings.

Best of all, no prior experience is necessary; a local manager provides complete training.

In addition to the money they earn, counselors can qualify for free crafts, prizes and trips to places such as Bermuda, St. Thomas and Acapulco. Equally important, they receive frequent recognition for their accomplishments, something many say they found lacking in their lives prior to joining Artcraft.

The innovative company is constantly seeking qualified manager candidates as well as counselors across the country.

GEORGETOWN DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

will open for the fall term on

Wednesday, Sept. 8, 1982

Any changes from last year's bus routing will be advertised in this newspaper.



Grade 9 students are to report to the Cafeteria for an introductory assembly at 9:00 a.m.

All other students will report to the rooms indicated on the various notice boards, at 9:30 a.m. At that time, registration procedures will commence. A full day's timetable will then be followed. Dismissal will take place at 3:15 p.m.

Most students will find their names on appropriate class lists, which will be posted in the foyer, or in the corridor near the cafeteria. Students whose names are not listed should report to the Student Services office.

Students having questions concerning registration or courses should contact the school office any day (Monday to Friday) between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. by Thursday, September 2nd.

Students must bring a combination lock with them on the first day of school or \$2.50 to buy a lock. Students are requested not to use magnetic or keyed locks.

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