

PART TWO

A series of case studies

1. *Correspondence Education*
2. *Educational Radio*
3. *Educational Television*
4. *Centrally co-ordinated resources for teaching and learning*

INTRODUCTION

The predominant attitude which prompted the passing of the resolution which led to this present project at the last Commonwealth Education Conference in Australia in 1971 was that of apprehension. The new media had, particularly over the previous decade, made a much-heralded appearance in educational circles. In almost all member States the media had been invoked to alleviate or to attempt to alleviate educational problems. Decisions had been taken, money had been spent, but results were not immediately apparent. It was felt at the Conference that 'because of the high expenditure to be incurred and the need to share expertise in the techniques of the use of educational media ... that Commonwealth cooperation should be extended in these areas'. Specifically it was recommended that periodical surveys to obtain and disseminate widely information about the needs and facilities for the use of educational media should be undertaken. A study which would help to prevent member states from taking ad hoc decisions was subsequently planned. Attention would be paid to those projects in which the new media were being used successfully.

If the study was to go any way to meet its objectives then first there had to be an

attempt to define the term 'successful'. Hours were spent deliberating on a precise meaning for this word. Finally it was decided to define 'successful' in the most pragmatic terms possible. Success was taken - for the purposes of this project only - as referring to any project which after a number of years was (a) receiving a constant or increasing amount of financial support from its backers, whether governmental, institutional, international or from a foundation, and (b) maintaining or increasing the numbers of people making use of the service. Success, in short, was indicated by an increase or growth of the service.

As stated in the Introduction, the new media were defined as being (a) the use of television for educational purposes, (b) the use of radio for educational purposes, (c) the use of correspondence education, and (d) the use of any combination of audio-visual media designed for teaching or learning.

From the information provided from the first phase of this Study some nineteen case studies were identified for further study on the basis of the criteria given above. The Research Study attempted to

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These six case studies were chosen from the many examples of 'successful' educational radio described in Part One of this survey, because they collectively offer an interesting and balanced set of operations; they span the spectrum from formal to informal education as they emphasize aspects of educational innovation and development serviced by educational broadcasters round the world. In each of these services, whilst there is the closest professional collaboration between the technical broadcasting staff and the educationists, it is the latter who have complete responsibility for all decisions on programme series, content, format, presentation and usage - a significant point since it is they who have been given the overall national responsibility for all aspects of the educational process. In brief - these case studies are felt to offer good examples of educational value being derived from the investment made.

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BRITAIN: BBC RADIO STOKE-ON-TRENT ADULT EDUCATION

BBC Local Radio

Radio started in Britain on a local basis and moved on to a national scale because of a shortage of wavelengths. However, the technical advances in VHF made truly local radio possible again and the BBC proposed sixty stations to operate as an additional service. The first phase of the operation was to include the establishment of twenty stations. The Government made an allocation of wavelengths and permission was granted to operate these twenty stations. Subsequent expansion has now been curtailed and 1973 saw the introduction of the first two commercially operated local radio stations.

The order and pattern of opening of the BBC local radio stations in England was: 1967 - Radio Leicester, Radio Sheffield, Radio Merseyside; 1968 - Radio Nottingham, Radio Brighton, Radio Stoke-on-Trent, Radio Leeds; 1969 - no new stations; 1970 - Radio Bristol, Radio Manchester, Radio London, Radio Oxford, Radio Birmingham, Radio Medway, Radio Solent, Radio Teesside; 1971 - Radio Newcastle, Radio Blackburn, Radio Humberside, Radio Derby; 1972 - no new stations opened; 1973 - Radio Carlisle (from Durham, which closed).

The typical BBC station serves a population of between half a million and one million persons. It costs about £150,000 capital (excluding the site) and

about £150,000 yearly recurrent costs. It originates about 3,500 hours of programmes in a year, and for the rest of its twenty hours of daily transmission uses programmes selected by the station manager from the BBC national networks. These programmes are used at will and without charge. The stations are financed by licence revenue which is supplemented by contributions in service or gifts.

The main effort of the station goes into the service of news, information and educational output at all levels. All stations offer their facilities to groups and individuals enabling local people to express themselves. One station manager has said 'At its best my station is a giant switchboard connecting the community to itself'.

Education has been a major preoccupation of BBC Local Radio from the outset. Indeed in a sense, the entire social purpose of local radio, as conceived by the BBC, may be described as educational. As education is a central concern of every civilized community, so too must any agency serving the aims of the community treat it as an area of human activity demanding special regard and support. Every one of the twenty local stations has an education producer and air-time is allocated for local educational programmes. At the beginning there was a great deal of scepticism about the need for locally produced and locally broadcast educational material. Some people thought that the existing national provision was adequate and that a local supplement could not be justified. But advocates for local educational radio saw the opportunity for a new form of educational broadcasting. There was a new range of possibilities, which would never be achieved by an extension of the BBC mainline educational provision. There was the possibility of calling upon and using directly the great funds of talent and professional skill in the teaching profession. Broadcasting needs in moderately-sized communities could be determined and accurately matched by the efforts of teachers and broadcasters working together. Furthermore, broadcasters would become more directly involved with the communities and audience that they served locally.

The Schools Broadcasting Council for the United Kingdom is an autonomous body which stands sponsor to all BBC broadcasts to schools. The SBC vested its responsibilities in locally formed Educational Panels which were to be representative of all educational interests in the areas. In practice, these Panels included both schools and further education interests. Invited for their local educational stature,