

Television and Creativity

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Abstract

Today it is very common in India for a household to have at least one television. Now a day's television has become the most popular type of communication and entertainment. Because of its popularity, television clearly has a far-reaching effect on human life in particular on student's behavior. It is already proved that learning through multisensory organs, has a great impact with long time stability. With a TV, student can easily gain useful knowledge in every area. The ability to be creative is an important factor in the development of a young child's mind. A burning question raise here that does TV influence the creativity of students? Creativity of students gets affected by the matter that they watch on TV. It is the belief of the investigator of this study that television is a significant force in the development of creativity and particularly so for students, who are in a formative stage of creative development.

KEYWORDS- Television, Creativity, Students

Today's children are unique in many ways from previous generation. Perhaps most influencing on our younger children today is Television. An entire generation of children in this nation has grown up with television as a primary influence in their lives. TV is often called the "Idiot box" and is considered as an entertainment medium. Television came to India on September 15, 1959 on an experimental basis which was later on launched in selected schools in Delhi on a regular basis from October 22, 1961. This experiment had a grant from UNESCO and with equipment offered by the US and Phillips (India) Company. The objective was to discover what TV could achieve in community development and formal education. The emphasis of broadcasting in the beginning was on its public service function. When TV was introduced in India the proponents were very eloquent on its educational potential. Creativity is one of the highest gifts that nature has bestowed a man. Creativity is as old as human history. Creativity is essentially human phenomenon. It is a process which helps him achieve dignity and meaning in life. In this fast changing world it is essential for our children that their level of creativity should be high. The ability to be creative is an important factor in the development of a young child's mind. Creativity is a subsuming life force, encompassing all aspects of human endeavor.

According to Jean Piaget (1920), children do not distinguish between self and the world at the earlier stages of intellectual development. At the operational stage of development they become aware of the world outside distinct from themselves. During the concrete operational stage which is from about 7 to 11 years, their thought processes are directed to real events observed by them. At the formal operational stage which is from about 11 to 14 years, children can deal with abstract or hypothetical situations and their thinking becomes logical. This formal stage of

children is very important because at this stage they become able to make some concepts. This process of concept making gets influenced very much by which they see and what they think.

By its very nature, TV seems to be a medium that emphasizes those very elements that are generally found in creativity- fluency, flexibility and originality. One may expect that TV program to stimulate children's creativity and serve a constructive role in socialization, though evidence seems to suggest otherwise. There has been a great paradox that TV fosters the creativity of students or destroys this. In this paper an attempt has been made to decide the role of Television in development of creativity of students.

Objective of the Study- The objective of this survey is to determine the influence of television watching on the creativity of the students.

Methodology- Historical survey methods were adopted in this study.

Bright Aspect of Television on creativity- Modern communication technology has brought a revolution in the world of mass communication. It has a vital role to play in the modernization of developing communities in to the national mainstream. Television is an excellent resource even though it is not always used to its full potential. Television has good side. It can be entertaining and educating and open up new worlds of children, giving them a chance to travel the globe, learn about different cultures and given exposures to ideas they may never encounter in their own community. Television provides many undeniable advantages for students. First of all there are many different types of programs on television. The viewer can watch a weather report to prepare the day. Cartoons and sports provide relaxation and fun. School programs, documentaries and the news teach students about the world and advertisement inform them about products and new ideas. Secondly, the content is appealing because it is realistic and up to date. Study of Bandura (1986)¹ found that new perspectives on common situations can foster creative performance by weakening conventional inclinations. If some children are exposed to TV characters or models who think divergently, they will usually be more innovative, as creative ideas are enhanced than those exposed to models who behave in conventional ways. Study of Vinod C Agarwal (1987)² explored that 40 % of TV viewers were students. Beittel (1966)³ performed a study which used television to provide a delayed feedback to a group of art student in an attempt to improve their performance. TV cameras taped the student's work of various intervals in its development and the experiments had the student comment on his work at these times. The study suggested some possibilities for improvement in a creative field through use of television. Godwin C & Wilbur, Schramm (1967)⁴ in his study says that there is no longer any doubt that children and adult learn a great amount from instructional television. Macbeth, T.M. (1996)⁵ in her study suggested that television may be responsible for an increase in children's creativity. She claims that the role of television can actually boost participation in other activities, such as reading and drawing. It is believed that in persistence and school performance she found in her research. Singer and Singer(2001)⁶ explored that TV has positive impact on children's creativity, creative tasks or imaginative play by enriching the store of idea from which children can generate when engage in these acts. It is argued that TV characters and events will be

picked up, transformed and incorporated in to children's creative products. Then as a result the quality and quantity of their creative products may be improved.

Above researches show that TV influenced children minds very much. Students get advantages from TV programs, pictures, animations, sounds etc. create a very fantastic environment for learning. Some TV shows can educate, inform and inspire. It can be more effective than books or lecture of teacher in teaching students about processes like how a plant grows and how our body system work. So it can be said that television enhance creativity and imagination of students.

Dark Aspect of Television on creativity- But on other side TV also affected negatively. TV is not substitute for meeting and interacting with real people in real situations. A child can not develop a sense of self in the absence of contact with others. While TV viewing, a child is not gaining practice in relating to other activities so that he can not develop constructive interpersonal problem solving. While children bombarded with TV images, their own ability to form imaginative pictures becomes severely impaired. This process of generating internal pictures is critical to the development of dendrites and neural connectors which lay the foundation for intelligence and creativity. Studies which have investigated how TV viewing affects performance in creative problem solving suggest that excessive viewing may lead to decreased attention, persistence and tolerance. The displacement of problem solving opportunities also results in a more limited repertoire of creative solutions. Wade, S. E. (1971)⁷ in United State found that heavy viewing was negatively correlated with creativity scores of adolescents. Stern, Stanley Lawrence (1973)⁸ conducted a research and their results were interpreted as a serious warning that current television programming is detrimental to children's creativity. Howe, M. J. A. (1983)⁹ found that children's creativity reduced when children spent plenty of their time on watching TV, at the expense of other leisure activities, such as playing, reading and listening to the radio, TV's reductive effect is not due to TV itself, but to the fact that it replaces other more beneficial activities. Shehwal and Purayidathil (2006)¹⁰ in his study found that the long hours spent in TV viewing not only adversely affected the student's academic growth and cognitive development.

The ability to be creative is an important factor in the development of a young child's mind. By sitting down and watching TV for a couple hours the child is entertained but is also not thinking. Information is spoon fed to them, so when it comes time to read a book in school, some can have a hard time grasping ideas. They are so used to having images, flash before them to provide understanding, they have trouble moving their eyes side to side together the information for themselves. With the television in front them, supplying amusement they may never stop to think that putting a puzzle together or reading a book could also be fun. They could actually become dependent on this one source of fantasy and never bother to create their own. As the child grows older it is less likely to put effort in to playing with other kids or taking it as a hobby. TV programs generate fright reactions in children during or after viewing and lead to regression in behavior and then undermining creativity.

Conclusion- It is very clear that TV viewing has become an integral part of modern life and almost every child grows up watching some TV. Generally information presented on TV seems to leave a deeper impression on children's mind, which

explains why they may draw from elements in TV presentations. However, there appears to be no conclusive evidence suggesting that TV viewing adversely impact a child's ability to think imaginatively and creativity. Having said so, there is some support for the claim that TV viewing does not promote imaginative thinking.

The results of this survey are important but not dramatic. They will not prove that television destroys creative ability. Indeed, there is a strong suggestion that television actually increases abilities but in some area it has negative effects. The results of this survey do indicate that increasing the amount of programs student watches or forcing exclusive categories of television production upon a child, will generally increase creative performance. Programs specially designed for children actually help relax the student. Depending on the content being watched, TV viewing produces a preponderance of slow alpha waves in the brain which are commonly associated with relaxation. This suggested that TV programming with good content can lead the creativity of students.

Suggestions for improving creativity through television viewing- Some steps can enhance the creativity of students through television.

Parents must do-

1. Let know how many hours of television a child watch. Watching television is often more habit than choice. Establish good viewing habits for children.
2. Encourage children to plan their viewing by using a TV guide or newspaper listing rather than flipping channels. Help the children to decide which show to see and encourage them to watch a variety of programs appropriate for their level of understanding.
3. Know what children watch on television. Watch with them and talk about the program afterward.
4. Encourage children to watch programs about characters that co-operate and care for each other. Such programs can influence children in positive way by modeling desirable behavior and setting good examples.
5. Children need parental help it critically evaluate the validity of then many products advertised on television. Teach children to analyze commercials and recognize exaggerated claims.

Teachers must do-

1. Become aware of the television viewing habits of the children in their room, what programs do they watch regularly? How many hours of television do they watch? Why do they watch television?
2. After acquainted with the children's viewing habits. Watch the children's favorite shows. Note the time of day of the program, the theme of program and the types and kinds of advertising.
3. Teacher should provide guidance in the class regarding television viewing,

and also recommended selected television programs that would assist the educational process in school. Teachers should be aware of the television programming for the week by reading TV guide or reading news paper.

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