

Media Scripting and Teacher Training

RAJENDRA PAL

Central Institute of Educational Technology, NCERT, New Delhi, India

Abstract : *The Government of India is planning to start a new educational channel but sufficient media software is not available for it. Educational media institutions are not able to utilize their production units fully to feed separate educational channel. The most probable reasons are scarcity of good and creative educational scripts. The reasons among scarcity of educational scripts are non availability of scriptwriters, lack of field level experience in professional script writers, less attractive payment in educational institutions etc.*

A teacher is confronted with large number of problems related to the teaching-learning process during his course of interaction with students, parents and community. One of the most effective ways to disseminate these innovations and creative attempts to public at large is through their writing for media. The media institutions should sign a memorandum, of understanding with teacher training institutions to start 'Script writing for media' as an optional paper for their trainees. This paper suggests a framework for media scripting and teacher training.

The Media

We all know that audio-visual media is a very fast and effective mode of disseminating the ideas and information in all the fields including education. Now it is a well established fact particularly in the field of education that only print media (i.e. textbook and supplementary books, etc.) can not explain all the facts and realities without the help of the other media specially audio-visual media. To exploit audio-visual media in education the various attempts have been made by the government and other agencies. Some of the attempts made by the government are :

Providing hardware

We are aware that under the centrally sponsored scheme of Educational Technology, Government supplied around 38 thousands Colour TV sets and more than 2.5 lakh RCCPs to various schools. An impact study of this scheme is also under taken on priority basis. The result will explain the actual picture latter on, but keeping in mind the inadequate time slots and unsuitable transmission time, it is more or less obvious that these hardware are grossly under utilized (considering all of them are in operation which may not be a reality). How can we increase the transmission slots and ensure the suitability of timing?

Providing slots on AIR and Doordarshan

All India Radio (AIR) has given 10 minutes weekly transmission slots from 10 AIR stations for elementary education programmes produced by CIET, NCERT. Doordarshan is providing almost 8½ hours of time for various stages of education weekly. But weekly time for telecast of elementary school education programmes was 2½ hours only till 3rd August, 98. However, 2½ hours time is also allotted since 3rd August, 98 for secondary classes. A 15-minute daily slot for primary school teachers is also started early morning at 6.45 since 20th October, 98. Our experience shows that whenever any live telecast is to be covered viz. parliamentary session, cricket match, death anniversary or birthday celebration of any leader, Doordarshan stop educational telecast without any prior information. Because of this irregularity, perhaps schools do not keep viewing period in their regular time table. Consequently in a study (Pal, 1998) found that children usually complained that they could not see a programme they liked because they were in the school therefore they suggest that programmes should be telecast in such a way that they could see the programme at their residence. Government also realized the importance of these media and proposed to start a separate channel for various stages of education soon. The shortage of media software is the most probable reasons among the factors responsible to delay the proposed separate channel for education. How to cope up with this situation?

Institutions for production of software

At the higher education stage UGC has established EMRCs and AVRCs, which are providing software for university and college students. Electronic Media Production Centre (EMPC) of IGNOU is also developing software for students, studying through distance mode. Some other organizations are also developing media programmes.

At the school level, Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET) at national level and six SIETs at Lucknow, Patna, Bihar, Bhubaneswar, Hyderabad, Ahmadabad, and Pune, at state level are producing educational media programmes in their respective regional languages in the form of audio and video. Apart from some other agencies National Open School (NOS) and the TV branch of SCERTs are also producing programmes for school television. Taken together they are only partially able to meet the software requirements. The relevant question is why programmes are frequently repeated?

The Real Problem

The author participated in a seminar on Management of Non print Media Resources organized by Commonwealth Educational Media Center for Asia (CIMCA) in collaboration with IGNOU and felt that the most important problem of the institutions producing media programmes is scarcity of good and creative script. All the institutions have sufficient production units but most of them are not able to utilise their resources fully. Another important question to be investigated is why we are not getting good scripts in the field of education.

The Probable Reasons

The review of literature indicts the following reasons for not getting good educational scripts:

- Non availability of good scriptwriters in education.
- Lack of field level experience in professional/free lance educational script writers.
- Less attractive payments for professional scriptwriters.
- Inconsistent availability of educational writers.

The Teacher: A Problem Solver

The teacher is confronted with a large number of problems related to the teaching-learning process. During the course of his teaching, a teacher deals with thousands of students and their problems. He also meets the parents and relatives of students to deal with their problems/complaints and thereby help students to improve their performance in the classroom. Every teacher searches his/her own solution to the teaching-learning problem according to his ability and demand of the situation. It is also to be noted that every teacher has his own method and style of teaching. Irrespective of the fact he has taken any formal training or not. Conversely we can say a teacher can provide solutions to various problems related to achievement of students in school subjects and all other aspects of educational and personality development.

In short, it can be said that a teacher faces innumerable problems and has to devise ways to tackle them. The important question is how, these solutions can be disseminated to fellow teachers and communities at large? One of the most effective ways to disseminate these innovations and creative attempts to public at large is through their writing for media.

Script Writer Vs Teacher

Table 1 explains the steps of script writing approach of script writers and teachers in the development of script. The table shows that a professional or free lance script-writer is not fully experienced in the classroom problems and their solutions, where as a teacher is fully aware of the grassroot level realities and can be more professional educational writer.

It is to be noted that free lancers are not available always for educational writing. Whenever they are free from other professional channels they come for educational writing and demand higher payment. Besides, we have to give them lots of background material before assigning the script, because it is not a part of his job. On the contrary the poorly paid teachers are always available, never demand high payment and work fast as they consider it a part of commitment to their job.

Table 1 : Aspects of script writing

S. No.	Steps of Scriptwriting	Script writer's approach	Teacher's approach
1.	Target audience	Discuss the nature and psychology of the audience with the educationist, psychologist and expert in pedagogy, consult library etc.	Already aware about the nature and psychology of learner through long standing experience in teaching and training and many a times both.
2.	Selection of theme and title	He will search/ select the themes and title with discussions and other available secondary resources.	As action researcher a teacher is always aware about the educational themes and problem/hard spots.
3.	Formulation of educational objectives	He is not aware about the writing educational objectives and will be depending on the educationist.	Normally aware and trained in writing educational objectives in behavioural terms.
4.	Selection of format	He will study various formats of education from secondary source and always depend on others.	He is using various formats in his daily teaching like story telling, drama, quiz, riddle, feature etc, totally independently
5.	Actual writing of script	He will search the content from the library or other resources, if it is information based and contact the educationist for all other classroom problems related to pedagogy/ sociology/psychology, etc..	Teacher is dealing with the content every day, he is aware about all the problems of students and their possible solutions.
6.	Testing of script	He will approach an educational institute for testing of script.	It is part of his job.

Pre-service Teacher Training and Script Writing

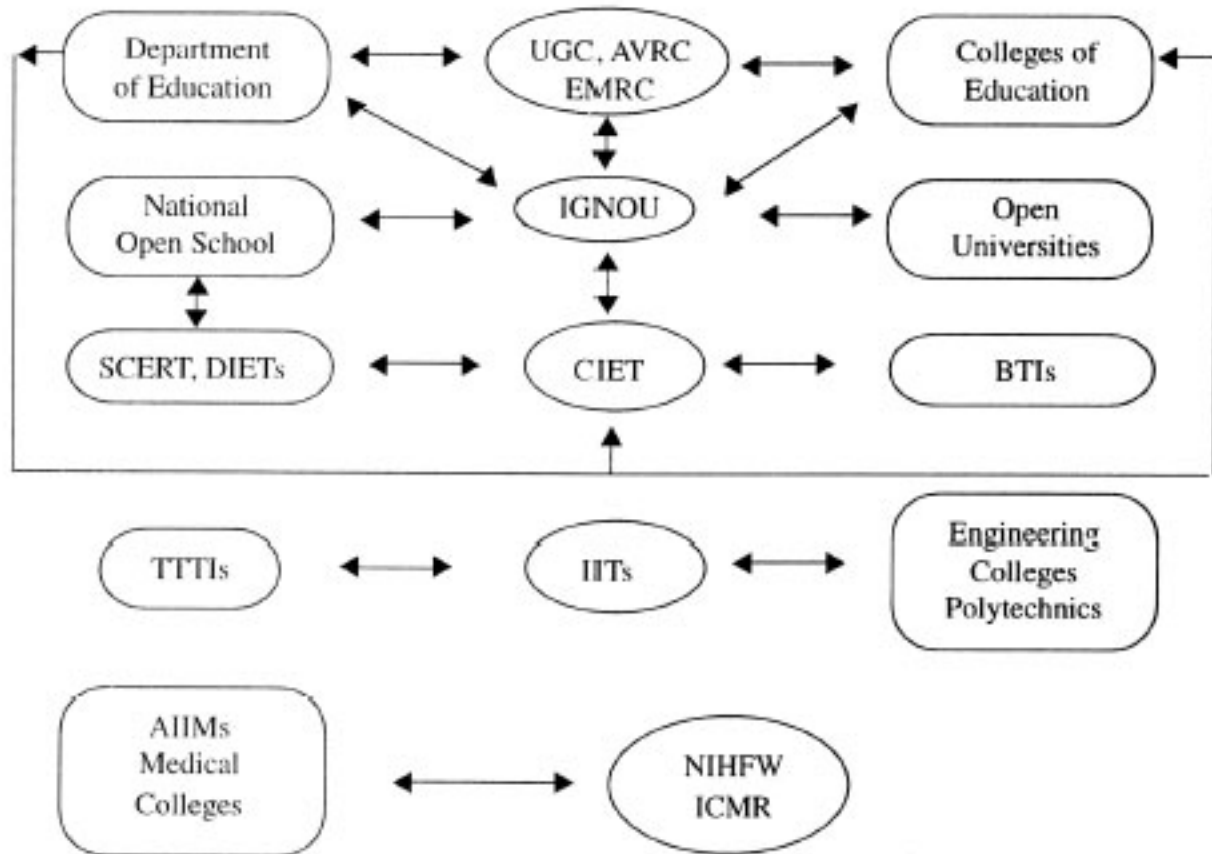
All the pre-service teacher training programmes generally have various optional papers like guidance and counseling, curriculum development, adult education, educational technology, etc. Similarly the teacher trainees have to submit some project work in the form of a written document. The assumption behind this optional paper is to prepare the trainees for a specialization of his own interest. The trainee has to work in his area of interest so that he can adopt this specialization.

It is suggested that a memorandum of understanding should be signed between media institutions and teacher training institutions to start Media Scripting as specialization in their collaboration. It will be more feasible with surrounding institutions. Media institute can provide their expertise to teacher training institutions either directly to the trainees or indirectly through the training of trainers.

For example institutes like CIET can have an understanding with SCERT, Delhi which control all the eight District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) in Delhi. Teacher trainees of these DIETs should have an option to select 'Media Script writing' as a specialization of their diploma. They can have theoretical experiences in the first

year or the first two semesters and practical applications in the subsequent two semesters.

Similar understanding can be established between UGC/AVRC/ EMRC/IGNOU/ NOS and Colleges of Education/University Departments/ Academic Staff Colleges etc. The possible linkages among media institutions and teachers training institutions are shown in the following conceptual diagram:



Through this process media institutions will have more number of scripts with more classroom realities without any payment. Teacher trainees will also have one more option to select as specialization and can adopt script writing as career.

Conclusion

It can be summarized that teachers/teacher educators/trainees can be effective script-writers provided we expose them about the characteristics and attributes of media. Therefore it can be concluded that the script writing should be essential part of every teacher education programme, because a teacher/trainee may not be aware about media and its various attributes. Sufficient number of good educational scripts would lead to increase the production of educational media software / programmes. It would make available sufficient educational media programmes and thus open the doors to start a separate channel of education. Thus there would be optimal utilization of hardware available in our educational institutions.

[Dr. Rajendra Pal is lecturer in E.T. (Instructional Design). Correspondence: Central Institute of Educational Technology, National Council of Educational Research and Training, Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110 016, India.]