

3

Bring the World into your Classroom: Media for EE

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3.1

As teachers, we are most familiar with the traditional chalk-talk-textbook formula for teaching and learning. For hundreds of years, these have been the tried and tested tools for education, and continue to be the foundation of the educational process. Today however, a range of educational media are available. The newspaper, relatively cheap and universally available, is an invaluable tool. Moreover, the educational potential of electronic media can be exploited for education in a variety of innovative ways. Video, film, television, computers, internet—all these offer the possibility of bringing the world into the classroom. Then there are exhibitions, performing arts, etc., all of which can be used for EE. These media are also especially useful in non-formal or out-of-school situations.

The use of a variety of media is important for education as a whole as these involve the use of several senses. It becomes especially relevant in the case of environmental education because it provides some ways of taking students through experiences which otherwise they would miss out on. Moreover, television, drama, puppets, songs, exhibitions are inherently attractive media.

However, every medium has its particular strengths, and these need to be carefully considered in relation to the objectives for which it is to be used. This unit emphasizes the key role of the teacher or facilitator in making sure that the use of these tools accomplishes the educational objectives. For this, planning is important. Whether it is a video viewing session or watching a play or a visit to an exhibition, a puppet show or a dance-drama, students will need to be suitably oriented to the context in which they will be seeing these. The experience needs to involve students' participation at some stage of the process. Finally, a consolidation of the learning therefrom needs to be an important element.

3.2

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Recognize the opportunity and understand the strength of various media available to you for EE
- Use a variety of media for EE in your school

3.3. NEWSPAPERS FOR EE

Newspapers are the most easily available and accessible media which can be used for EE. They have the advantage of being current and dealing with real-life issues. (For more ideas on how to use newspapers for EE, please refer to Module 3 Unit 5 'Using Language for EE'.)



3.4 EXHIBITIONS FOR EE

Exhibitions are popular with schools, colleges, NGOs etc., as a means of creating awareness on a given topic. In a school or college, an exhibition has a two-fold educational value—those who create and put it up have to do a lot of research, writing, design, organization, etc. and thereby it becomes a learning experience for them. Those who come to view the exhibition get the message and therefore it is learning for them also.

Sometimes however, students who are developing exhibitions are constrained by various factors: lack of information, lack of a proper conceptual framework, lack of a particular skill such as illustration or writing, lack of resources etc., which may reduce the quality of the exhibition. On the other hand, in a school situation, where large groups of children are brought to view the exhibition, it is often found that most children read the first few posters or panels and then just walk past the remaining panels without seriously looking at them. They are often distracted and since they are in an out-of-class situation, more in the mood for fun and games than of learning. An exhibition may be a short experience, but it can be used as a way of triggering off a thinking process and a change in attitudes and action. Therefore it is necessary to think about and plan exhibitions with care.

3.4.1 Some tips for organizing a successful exhibition

You need to be very clear about the theme and objectives of the exhibition. The theme depends on the occasion and purpose with which the exhibition is being designed—whether it is for the Annual Day, for an inspection visit, an inter-school competition (where the themes may be given), or it is being put up to facilitate students' learning on a particular topic. Whatever the occasion, as a teacher you need to decide the educational objectives sought to be achieved through the process of developing and putting up the exhibition. Since its development involves group work, the process also facilitates team building in your class.

The theme can be discussed in the class so that all the students understand the various facets of the task. Then it needs to be decided how many posters should be developed. Students can be divided into groups and each group assigned different responsibilities – for example, doing research, designing, drawing, collecting supporting materials, etc.



Some Interesting Exhibition Themes from an EE Perspective

- My City/My Village
- Energy/Water: Waste not, Want Not
- Disasters: Let's be Prepared
- Clean up the Air
- Our Endangered Wildlife

3.4.2 Adding value

A. Models

Adding three-dimensional objects to an exhibition brings it to life. For example, besides a poster giving information about electricity generation and its use, an electronic meter can be used for demonstration. This can be done by plugging various appliances into a point directly attached to a meter. Visitors can see which appliances use more power and which ones use less.

B. Locale-specificity

Audiences react best when the information, data, photos etc. in an exhibition are locale-specific, something they can relate to, and something they see around them. Therefore it is important to allow space within the exhibition for bringing in such details. If the audience consists of children and communities, it becomes important that the exhibition is available in the local language.

Posters and exhibitions are strong visual media; therefore text should be minimal. An interesting exercise for making the exhibition more interactive is to have it accompanied by a quiz/puzzle/game where viewers are required to fill up blank spaces on the posters. The clues to these blank spaces can be displayed either in the form of a chart besides the poster, or in the form of a leaflet. The blank spaces may require the viewers to write or draw something from their imagination.

C. Facilitation

There is a big difference between just walking through an exhibition and having a facilitator bring it to life. A facilitator who guides the group around the exhibition is crucial to sustaining interest and ensuring learning. As a teacher, you will need to prepare a group of students who will guide the visiting group through the exhibition. These students should be able to speak confidently about the theme of the exhibition. The facilitators should have adequate background information on the themes of each of the posters. At times, facilitators also need to initiate a discussion with the audience. In such a situation, you may need a senior student to facilitate the process or you may want to do it yourself.

D. Interspersing hands-on activities

It is important to break up the monotony of posters and text with activities which help in consolidating and reinforcing the messages on the posters. This way it is also possible to go from information to some level of attitude formation and action. Children like to get involved in hands-on activities in which they do something or create something. Wherever possible, a participatory activity on each of these themes/posters that students could do after viewing could be planned. For example, associated with the posters on waste management, there could be a resource person who would teach children how to creatively use waste and make craft items, i.e. 'best from



waste'. Such activities should link the information in the poster to the student's life and suggest actions they could take to improve the environment. The activities should be such as would require minimal facilities/equipment etc., so that the students would be able to do them easily. As a teacher you should also sum up the activity by doing a de-briefing session.

E. Take Home Material

Some handouts, information leaflets which the visitors can take back with them can also be made to have a lasting impact. For instance, at a poster discussing electricity, a chart giving the electrical consumption of various household items and details on how to calculate a household's monthly consumption should be kept. The same can be given as a handout. Similarly, for posters relating to garbage, visitors can be given a hand-out with step-by-step instructions on how to make a compost pit for kitchen waste. For a poster related to the need for green spaces, visitors can be given a sapling, accompanied by a note on how to plant and care for the plant.

F. Feedback

It is important to think of ways to get feedback from the audience. This could be through a form they fill at the end, or through having a board on which they can write their feelings about the exhibition. This will help you improve the exhibition.

We hope the above steps help you plan an exhibition – maybe during Wildlife Week (1st week of October).



CEE's ACT NOW Exhibition

This Example will give you all idea about how innovatively an exhibition developed can be used at different times in differnt ways.

In 1993, CEE developed an exhibition titled 'Act Now', focusing on urban environmental issues and addressing what individuals can do to improve the environment.

The exhibition consists of a set of posters, accompanied by a manual for the teacher/organizer. The manual has a number of suggestions on how to optimize the use of the posters to create a full-fledged exhibition. The manual discusses every poster starting with the theme, ideas on what could go on the supplementary panels, how to set up hands-on exhibits, points of discussion that could be used by volunteers, extra information, and suggestions on what visitors could take back with them.

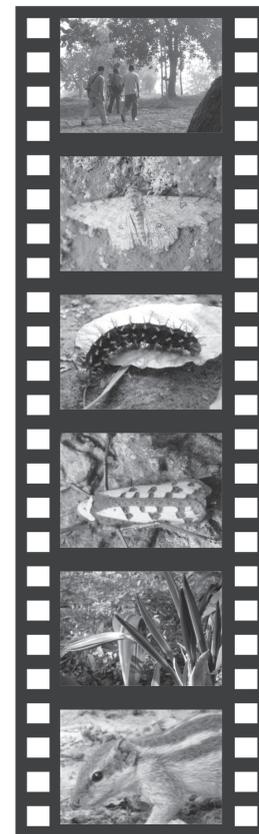
Half of the total number of the poster sets were printed without text. That is, only the visual was printed and blanks were left where the text should be. A pamphlet with text in English was printed with notes as to which part of the text should go where on the poster. This way, students using the posters in different parts of the country could translate the text into the relevant language and fit it into the appropriate place. They could handwrite it, stick computer printouts, or use any other means. They could also introduce local data and information into this text.

The manual also suggests how to conduct and sum up the demonstration/ supporting activities and draw lessons from it. For example, with the poster on water conservation, it was suggested that the organizer set up and do the activity 'Every Drop Counts' (mentioned in Module 3).

Similarly, while developing such an exhibition in your school which is going to be used for years to come, it will help if you have developed a manual that will help other teachers see the various opportunities offered by it. You can also use the above-mentioned idea of leaving blank spaces on posters so that it offers the flexibility of being used in different languages especially when it is being used in a situation like an inter-school fair.

3.5 TELEVISION AND FILMS FOR EE

Television is a very effective medium of communication; it has the advantage of catching the attention of the viewer, especially children and students. There has been a tremendous increase in television viewership over the years, especially after the surge of private and government-owned channels. Many of these channels have slots for educational programmes for children and some channels cater exclusively to children. Many are also devoted to environment related concerns or have clear slots for such purposes. Therefore, television can be used as an effective tool for communicating about the environment. Television can help to develop attitudes, and motivate individuals to act positively towards the environment.



Good-quality video programmes find use not only in broadcast mode but also as much in the non-broadcast mode. There are a number of educational videos made for children and available in the market today which can be effectively used in situations such as classrooms, camps, workshops, etc. A good quality programme would be that which can help children explore and understand their surroundings and also inspire them to go and look for some information from other sources like teachers, library, etc. As a teacher, you may identify educational programmes being broadcast by different channels and ask your class to view them at their homes. The next day, the students' experience and learnings from the programme can be discussed in the class. Alternately, good quality educational programmes can be borrowed from various sources and a viewing session may be organized in the school.

3.5.1 Organizing a successful television/video viewing

The following steps will help you plan and structure the outcomes of a television programme viewing or a classroom viewing session by your students.

Selection of Programme: The programme should have an educational value but should also be done in an interesting way. The topic of the programme should be something which students will identify with. The language and accent used in the programme should be such that the students can follow.

Pre and post-viewing discussion: A danger with a medium that combines 'fun' and 'education' is that sometimes students may miss the education for the fun! Therefore, you as a teacher need to discuss the programme to ensure that your educational objectives are met.

Size of Group: In case of a viewing session at school, the size of the group is another consideration. For effective pre and post-viewing discussions, a group of 25 to 30 would be manageable. Ensure that the students can all see the screen and hear the audio.

Recapitulation: The key messages of the programme can be reinforced by you through a related hands-on activity. This helps students to remember the messages. It would help to plan and structure a series of activities around the programme. You will need to develop, prepare or think of related activities beforehand. If you are using the video/film to directly teach a textbook concept the link needs to be explicitly made for the students.

Accompanying material: You can prepare supporting literature/material on the theme of the programme to be distributed in the class. The material could carry additional information of the topic of the programme.

Feedback: A written or an oral feedback may be taken from the students after the viewing – whether they liked the theme of the programme, the concerns and aspects brought to fore in the programme, its presentation, etc. This will help you to plan for future viewing sessions.



3.6 PUPPETS FOR EE

In many parts of the world, puppets are traditionally used in storytelling. Puppeteers have used history, mythology, anecdotes and experiences from around them to weave them into tales that have drama, romance and action. Many different forms of puppets exist around the world—string puppets, shadow puppets, stick puppets, glove puppets, finger puppets etc.

A carpenter once made two beautiful wooden figures. Goddess Parvati saw these two colourful figures and in a playful mood slipped into one figure and enticed lord Shiva to enter the other one. They then began a celestial dance duet. They quit later and let the two figures fall on the ground. The carpenter who had watched his inanimate creations come alive for a while and then become lifeless, prayed to the divine couple to animate them. They agreed to help the carpenter if he suggested a method of doing so. The carpenter then hit upon the idea of tying strings to the various limbs of the figures, so that when someone pulled the strings, the figures would move. The divine Shiva and Parvati blessed the innovation and this is how, they say, PUPPETRY was born.

(Source: Handicrafts of India, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, ICCR, New Delhi – www.puppetryindia.org)

Puppets can be very effective in communicating messages to students. Puppetry may be used to convey information on subjects like language, science, social studies, mathematics, and environmental education. While the storytelling, song and dance format keeps the interest alive, it is possible to weave in the message into the story such that the students will find it interesting enough to remember it. It is also possible to get students to develop and perform puppet shows. This way they learn to creatively communicate to others, while learning a skill themselves. Puppetry gives tremendous scope to learn the art of drawing, painting, needle work and carpentry as well as music, song and story writing.

3.6.1 Planning a puppet show

Deciding the concept/theme: Begin at the beginning which is deciding on a concept or theme for the puppet show. It would be useful to encourage students to think of an issue in their immediate vicinity e.g. conserving of water, managing garbage, or even a story of a pond. It should be possible to present the concept in a story form and have ‘do-able’ messages for the audience.

Develop the story: The theme once decided will now need to be converted into a story. To do this, keep the audience in mind. It will be useful to know the age, education, social and cultural background of the audience. Also



prior research on the behaviour of the audience in the context of the issue being addressed would help build in contextuality to the story. The more close to reality a story is, better chances it would have of its acceptance by the audience. It would also help to keep it simple. The story would need to also keep in mind the kind of puppets being used as each form of puppet would have different requirements, strengths and limitations.

Communication will be more effective if you can build humour, local examples and dialogue into the story. Make the characters and name them interestingly. About five characters is a manageable number for a puppet show. Along with the characters, also develop the ideas on the backdrop and other props such as trees, houses, etc.

The story once complete is now ready to be written out as a script with dialogues, songs, the dramatization including entry and exit of various characters etc. 10-15 minutes is a good duration for a puppet show. While writing the script, the students can decide among themselves as to which character they would play, who would be developing the backdrop and hold the props etc. It will be useful to get them thinking about their roles from the beginning itself.

Making the Puppets, Creating the Backdrop and Props

Here is a simple method of making **Glove Puppets**. A glove puppet is a small figure having head and arms with a long skirt as part of its costume. The puppeteer wears the puppet like a glove and fits the index finger into the hollow head of the puppet. The middle finger and the thumb fit into the two hollow hands of the puppet. One puppeteer can manipulate two puppets at a time.

Materials required:

- Small plastic balls, Cutter or knife
- Cloth pieces, clean rags of different colours, prints
- Wool or thread for the hair
- Ornaments and embellishments to decorate
- Used paper
- Old glossy magazines
- Chart paper
- Marble paper of different colours
- Sketch pens, markers of different colours
- Water colours/fabric paints/poster colours
- Crayons, Needle and thread, Long stick pieces
- Glue, rice putty

For heads, you need small plastic balls. Ensure that the surface is not very hard as you would need to cut out a small portion to fix the neck into. Take used paper, tear it into strips and stick it to the ball so that the ball is covered. Leave the hole made for the neck as it is. Let the ball dry.



Roll a card paper into a cylindrical shape by sticking the two ends. Cut one end into small strips. Place glue on these and then push it through the hole – that is the neck. Hold it still the neck is steady. Wobbly necks would cause the puppet to break midway in a performance or would not be good to move. Now the basic head is ready for shaping into a character. Depending on the character and the story, the students can decide the look they want to give it. For the hair, they can use thread, wool, cloth etc. Features such as the ears, nose etc. can be made using a card paper or a stiff cloth and stuck on to the face.

Now the head has to be attached to a glove, the first finger of which would go into the neck part. Please illustrate. The students can stitch the glove from cloth using measurements of their own hands and making it a little bigger than that. Once this is done, the clothes of the puppets can be stitched on to this.

Props such as trees, houses or anything else that are a part of the story but are not speaking can be made from cardboard or other similar material and stuck on long sticks. These could be used as and when required. A large background scene also can be painted by the students on paper, cloth or canvas if required.

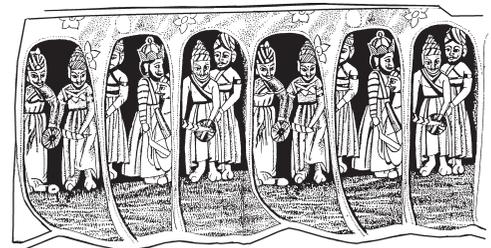
Practicing the Performance

The puppets are interesting only if they appear to be alive and lively. So the performers would need to practice their act thoroughly and get their hand movements smooth. They would need to get into their characters and know their dialogues well. It is useful to audio record the dialogues and songs if the performance is to be done several times. Even then, the performers would need to practice with the recorded script.

Performance

On the actual day of the performance, they would need to remember to arrange the following:

Stage: Glove puppets are generally performed with the performers standing behind a screen or partition, with only their hands seen at the top. It would be important to have a screen (a thick cloth as partition works well) in place. This would be part of the kit the performers carry, in case they are going to perform at more than one place. Also, it would be useful to check the place beforehand to know how the screen and the backdrop if any, can be put up. Accordingly, a string, or clips etc. can be arranged and kept ready. Another important aspect for the stage would be to ensure that it is not too high as the audience will not be able to see the puppets from too great a height. The space behind the screen would need to be adequate to accommodate free movement for the puppeteers, and to keep the props. In case an audio-tape is being used, the system for playing this and amplifying the sound have to be in place. The name of the puppet show must be visible at a strategic location near the stage.





Introduction: An introduction by a ‘Sutradhaar’ or the person who would begin and end the show helps set the tone for the performance. This is followed by the performance. After it is over, all the puppeteers can come out and introduce their characters and themselves to the audience.

End: If possible, a discussion could be initiated for debriefing and reinforcing the message.

Puppet shows become interesting when the puppeteers are also enjoying their performance. Puppetry – the puppets and the script must ensure that the fun element is retained along with the importance of the message.

3.6 CONCLUSION

In order to use media effectively for good teaching-learning, one does not need to become a ‘media-specialist’; nor does one necessarily require to design and produce new media for such uses. As illustrated in this unit, one only needs to be creative and innovative in putting the available, existing/low-cost media products to good use for good education.

3.7

- What are the titles of the panels you would make for an exhibition for Wildlife Week for your students? Where would you get photographs? List six sites where you would look for information for this exhibition.
- The weather reports on TV or Radio can be put to good educational use. What assignments would you give your students around these?

