

middle/high levels. The aims of these activities were to develop positive attitudes towards the change and to dispel fears and uncertainties. Parent familiarization was also attempted.

Interestingly, the project team discovered no particular problems with pupils as a result of transferring schools.

Curriculum link meetings between teachers and administrators met with a number of problems. Described were "lack of direction dysfunction" — which was partially alleviated by limiting discussions to just one subject or even one aspect of a subject.

Repetition of teaching material was described as a problem interfering with curriculum continuity. This one item met with both agreement and considerable disagreement. Repetition of work was defended as being positive and not detrimental to continuity.

For the reader who is looking for a panacea to solve the problems of loss of curriculum continuity, he will not find them here. Rather he will discover an interesting local study with some concluding perceptions for administrative coping.

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Roe, Keith., *Mass Media and Adolescent Schooling: Conflict or Co-existence?* Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1983, 244 pp., \$21.50.

Interest in the effects of mass mediated culture (particularly via television) on child and adolescent development and human behaviour generally, stems from the advent of electronic mass communication itself. Several decades of research into the effects of television viewing and behaviour have resulted in a voluminous outpouring of research findings. Despite this widespread interest and these massive efforts, however, few unequivocal findings have been produced. This is partly because, as is frequently the case in human affairs, the matter is extremely complex and partly because the research tradition itself is only now emerging from its infancy.

The overriding theme (sometimes implicit but frequently explicit) that has dominated this research is that televised material has a causal and unidirectional effect on the viewer. A particularly good example of this is the extensive research of Albert Bandura and his colleagues on the question of the effects of film-mediated violence on the aggressiveness of the viewer. Bandura has employed carefully controlled experimental studies and has shown that exposure to film-mediated violence can enhance the aggressiveness of the viewer under a variety of conditions. This work, however, has come under criticism primarily because the experimental situations are deemed to be "artificial" — that is, they are not representative of "real-life" viewing. Bandura's findings, then, may lack ecological validity.

A second major research strategy to the study of the effects of television is the correlational approach. A good illustration of this approach is the study of the effects of mass media exposure on educational achievement. In this research it is frequently demonstrated that amount of television viewing is inversely related to reading ability, mathematics achievement, basic skills achievement and so on. Similarly, the types of programmes watched are related to attitudes and interests about education and schooling. Even for the correlational studies, the basic theme of this research is that TV viewing has causal and unidirectional effects (usually detrimental) on schooling.

In his recently published book, *Mass Media and Adolescent Schooling: Conflict or Co-existence?*, Keith Roe reverses the orthodox causal specification of the relationship between the mass media (especially television) and

school achievement "to see whether such a switch of perspective is valid and fruitful" (p. 196). Thus Roe reports some extensive research designed to explore the possibility that mass media use is determined by certain aspects of school experience rather than determining them. The findings from this study do indeed suggest that such a switch in perspective may be fruitful.

The major purpose of the Roe study was to "examine the relationship between aspects of school experience, especially school achievement and school commitment, adolescents' peer group orientations and their uses and preference with regard to the mass media (especially 'pop' music and TV)" (p. 1). To address this imperative, Roe undertook a longitudinal study of 509 children (nearly the entire 1965 cohort in Vaxjo, a town of 62,000 inhabitants situated in southern Sweden). The data were collected in 1976, 1978, 1980 and 1981 when the children were 11, 13, and 15 years old respectively. Since it is not directly reported, it is difficult to determine precisely the final sample size though it may be 92% of the original sample as best as can be made out. The subjects' parents also provided data with a 79% participation rate by the end of this study. Subject mortality is inevitable in any longitudinal study but Roe's analyses suggested that the subjects who dropped out were not systematically different from the subjects who remained. Subject mortality, therefore, did not seriously compromise the representativeness of Roe's sample as is sometimes the case in longitudinal studies.

Through interviews, questionnaires, standard measurement instruments and school records, data on five classes of variables were collected: (1) socio-economic background and demographic status; (2) aspects of school experience (achievement and commitment to school); (3) commitment to the peer group; (4) mass media use (TV-use, video viewing, interest and use of pop music, music preferences); and (5) future life expectations and chances. The procedures used to analyze the data are rather complex and involve analyses of variance, multiple classification analyses and structural equation techniques (primarily LISREL). The use of such techniques was necessitated by the complexities of the causal relationships between the variables and hypotheses tested. (The non-expert in these methodologies need not feel intimidated as much can still be gained from this study though the intricacies of the LISREL analyses, for example, may not be fully understood).

The results from this study are too numerous and complex to summarize fully in a short review but a summary of the most important findings is in order. Most importantly, an empirical link between indicators of school achievement and commitment to mass media usage is established. Moreover, a causal relationship in the direction posited by Roe is indicated, suggesting that, paradoxically, the school itself may provoke attachment to the values, attitudes and mass media use against which it is supposed to be a bastion. Roe's original assertion that the causal relationship may be the reverse of what is usually held in the orthodox view of schooling and mass media use, gains support by the data in this study.

Perhaps the second most important sets of findings which are worthy of mention are the sex differences. Home background for girls, for example, is a far more influential factor in determining TV and pop music use, parent/peer orientation and anticipated "real job" than it is for boys. For both genders, however, home background strongly influences school achievement and commitment. Pop music also plays a far more important role in early female adolescence than it does for males. On the basis of these sex differences and others, Roe suggests that separate theoretical models are needed for male and female adolescents. If Roe is right (as he seems to be), many of the typical "sexless" findings for mass media use and schooling may thereby be rendered almost meaningless since opposite effects for males and females may exist. This moderator variable approach — variables which mediate relationships between two other variables — may also be fruitfully applied to social class, age, level of achievement and so on.

Has Roe achieved his goal with this study? While the goal hasn't yet been fully achieved, Roe has at least developed a theoretical framework and a methodological approach which hold promise for exploring the complex causal relationships between school achievement and mass media use. The simplistic orthodox view of unidirectional causal influences has provided a useful framework for much research but it now seems too restrictive. Roe's study is an indication that this research tradition may at last be moving out of its infancy. Roe's book is important as it argues persuasively for a more complex and realistic view of the relationships between

schooling and mass media. Adopting such research strategies may lead to a more complete explication of these complex relationships.

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Postman, Neil, *The Disappearance of Childhood*. New York, N.Y.: Delacorte Press, 1982, 192 pp., \$13.50.

In his *Devil's Dictionary*, Andrew Bierce defined childhood as "The period of human life intermediate between the idiocy of infancy and the folly of youth — two removes from the sin of manhood and three from the remorse of age." Approximately three hundred years earlier, Balthazar Gratien said, "Every man must be conscious of that insipidity of childhood which disgusts the sane mind. . . . Only time can cure a person of childhood and youth which are truly ages of imperfection in every respect." In the years separating these unsentimental observers, a set of socio-cultural and economic forces transformed the conditions of life and the way life is felt and regarded by most of mankind. The bourgeois revolution and the Romantic movement were so successful in shaping a conventional outlook and sentiment in European and neo-European societies that utterances such as those just attributed to Bierce, strike us as droll.

Although some things remain as before (business is still in charge) much has changed. Infant mortality has been dramatically reduced — and so has adult authority — including that of parents. Nutrition and sanitation are much improved as are official literacy rates and medical practices. These and a host of other factors have changed the experience of childhood and our thoughts and feelings about it. This is not to say that the experience of childhood and our reactions to it are uniform now. Class and cultural differences exist now as before. Moreover, this is not to say either, that the central facts of childhood have changed. Early helplessness and prolonged dependency are biological and social facts which resist changes of almost any sort — no matter where or when. Peurility has probably been noticed always and everywhere; and the important facts of differing degrees of maturity, as phenomena of social significance are unlikely to remain unnamed and ignored in almost any circumstances.

Neil Postman, in *The Disappearance of Childhood*, seems to argue against the foregoing perspective. Postman (like others before him) claims that "childhood is a social artifact, not a biological category" (p. xi). Moreover, he continues, if "children" is a term which denotes "a special class of people somewhere between the ages of seven and seventeen," requiring special treatment and believed to differ from adults in important ways, then "children have existed for less than four hundred years" (p. ix). Postman tries to persuade the reader that while the ancient Romans acknowledged childhood, this recognition disappeared with Rome's decline. He believes that childhood had to be reinvented by the Renaissance (p. xii). In a passage which brings together the elements of a loose and unsatisfactory argument (he calls it a theory — p. xiii) Postman attempts to explain the alleged disappearance of childhood: He alleges that, "the absence of literacy, the absence of the idea of education, the absence of the idea of shame . . . are the reasons why the idea of childhood did not exist in the medieval world" (sic) (p. 17), and they are now (he claims) making childhood disappear again (p. xii).

This line of reasoning and this sweeping style are reminiscent of Marshall McLuhan, that deeply conservative Catholic from Alberta who became a mass media celebrity in New York. Postman, who is Professor of Media Ecology at New York University, is apparently an admirer of McLuhan and another Canadian, Harold Innis, whose ideas McLuhan simplified and popularized. Indeed, Postman seems to take Innis as his prophet, if not his model for scholarship.

Innis was an adventuresome, resourceful, and inventive scholar who disdained conventional boundaries between subject departments, or, as he called them, information monopolies. However, while he was bold,