Enhancing Parent-Child Interaction to Enhance Learning with Television

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Abstract

This paper involves creating a system that provides parents with tools and information to help children learn from television. Children who converse with their parents during television viewing are better able to evaluate and make sense of content. This research describes a system, called the parent trap, which sends messages to model dialogues that promote more fragment and longer conversations, which include inquiry and explanation. This paper suggests ways television shows can be authorized with additional, digital information to help parents learn strategies for conversing with their children.

Introduction

Television delivers vast and varied amounts of information by broadcasting images, audio, and text (on-screen or through closed captioning). Televisions are found in over 98% of households across the nation. However, television is more than just a mechanism for delivery content and information; it is a social mechanism. It is a technology that influences many aspects of daily life, from shopping to cooking to sheer entertainment (Huston; 2002 and Csikszentimihalyi 2003). In home, television viewing usually occurs in common spaces - family rooms, living rooms and eating areas and this placement may not be accidental, since the majority of all television viewing occurs in these rooms the likelihood that people will watch together and talk about the television as they watch increases. (Alabi 2000),

The social interactions that occur around television can often enhance learning opportunities for viewers. For these instance, we know that children can learn a great deal from educational television programs (Clifford 2006, Dorr and Rabin, 2005; Huston and Wright, 2006, Wetzel, Alabi 2008). We also know that interactions with peer and parents during television viewing can change the otherwise passive "viewing" experience into one where children actively question content (Alabi, 2002). This paper attempts to discover new ways to promote conversations between parents and children to create additional opportunities for learning with television.

Television can be useful as a source of instructional material. In schools, for example, social studies lessons teaching and science teaching use the programs such as how bills are passed in the house of Assembly and reproductive system, therefore introduce such concepts the teacher conduct experiments, and discuss

content. Several educational programs also provide teachers guides with lesson plans, ideas for classroom activities as additional resources to guides instruction. These guides help teachers generate curriculum that extends the content of a television program, children's science and mathematics series, for example teachers have activity guide, which describes how to help children understand basic concepts in Science (Latinone, 2008). It also provides information on scientific resources as well as instructions for activities and related science challenges that children can participate in. In conjunction with teaching strategies, these guides can help educators use television as instructional tools in classrooms helping parents understand the strategies that classroom teacher's use that might also transform television into learning tools in homes. In home, viewing television can entertain children and excite curiosity about the whole world around them. Alabi (2004) believes that it can also help children learn important information, skills, values and behaviour.

For example watching Tale's by moonlight, work it out, Tom and Jerry, sesame street and others imaginative play, while television will teach basic facts or behaviors, mediation during viewing by a knowledgeable adult that can influence critical skills, such as comprehension and reflection of content (Alabi, 2004). For instance, there are some programmes that when both mother and children watch together, children understand better like Tale's by Moonlight and Sesame street programme. The prompting and

guidance that parents offer can lead children to think outside the program content, to understand how the knowledge can be applied to the situation. The types of conversations that parents and children engage in around television are often more descriptive than explanatory, they describe an opinion about the show, such as "that was good", or "why are we watching this nonsense?" (Alabi, 2004) A more explanatory comment would involve reflecting on the content of the programme. For example, when a child says, "I" learned today that you can count the rings on a tree to tell its age" The response "That nice" effectively ends the conversation, but in contrast, a response such as, "How do scientists know that? Let's think about how they figured that out," invites further discussion and exploration. These types of conversation treat television as a source of learning materials that must be supplemented with some sort of meditation or intervention by parents.

To promote interaction and explanatory dialogues parents should help understand how to structure conversations by giving them better insight into the content of a television program. As parents try to model question asking and problem posing strategies that they can use for other shows and life in general, parents and children can start to ask questions about its specific issues presented in a television programs and generate explanation for how and why events occur in the world. Parents who are provided with information about programme and about how to ask questions that encourage inquiry and

exploration may have greater success in initiating dialogues with their children around television content.

To generate information about content, this paper developed frameworks for television producers that make their tacit assumptions underlying programme decision explicit. The frameworks are built around the main issues of a program, alternative issues, that may not have represented, and questions that might arise from the issues and alternatives. Three elements make up the design rationale of a television program which describes, how and why a show is meant to be educational. Design rationale is a methodology for articulating decisions behind engineering artifacts (Lee and Lai,1991; Maclean, 2001; Moran and Carroll, 2000). These rationales place emphasis on the process of creating a building, computer program, or graphical interface, recognizing that the decision process can be used by others to learn about the ultimate product. In this paper features such as justification generated from these methodologies is to create rational for television programs were television producers could be encouraged to articulate their decision for including and discarding content during their editing process. If parents can comprehend the intention of the producer, they may be able to understand the important lessons to help their children learn.

One goal of revealing rationale is to increase the communication between parents and children to assist learning from television. A second goal is to lead television producers to reveal their design rationale for educational content.

That is, to think about the implicati of decisions they make when develop content. The agenda that should followed to accomplish these go includes:

- Developing a theory o justification that describes the content and rationale behind children's television programming. What pedagogical and content issues need to be represented to describe the educational benefits of children's television? How can these features be communicated to producers to influence their design and production decisions? i What types of tools are needed to m represent and encode le justifications into television gu broadcast? (G

- Assessing the impact of justification on adult –child interactions and learning. Ca programs labeled with additional justifications affect the types of conversations that occur during co-viewing? Are children able to learn more through conversations when parents are provided with the knowledge encoded in the design rationale? Are parents themselves learning more about inquiry and question-asking strategies when using justification to converse with their children? Are these conversations moving away from

simple evaluations of programs and becoming descriptive and explanatory commentaries. By giving producers on Ontology of Pedagogical features and ways to justify their use, producers should have critical thinking of the reflection on their programming decision with respect to educational concerns. The hypothesis is that explicit guidelines will assist producers in deeper reflections about their own conception of learning as they create educational content. Justifying the educational quality of children's programming might also convince parents of a program's quality and increase the viewing audience. Parents might be able to help their children learn if they are given the proper guidelines and scaffolding tools (Gleason and Schauble 2000).

During television viewing, Parents play a more beneficial role in their children. Digital justifications for television also provide new opportunities to children. Justification elements can be shown to children before, during and after broadcasting to help them question the contents for themselves. Guided questioning during the program can assist viewers in developing inquiring skills around the content. Information from design rationales can also be used to generate ideas for related activities in children's local communities. This paper also

deals with the existing program content on NTA so that it relies less on information transfer and more on engaging children in inquiring and problem solving.

It was further agreed that informal learning activities around television can be increased by helping children learn more as the watches the television from an educational reform movements such as inquiring learning and teaching. This paper has also discussed/explained the system that was built to encode digital information into television programs with this system called the parent trap. Producers of children's television and information should justify the content of their programmes and what type of questions will best guide content developers in justifying educational television content.

Enhancing Educational Television

The parent trap describes how the system delivers information to parents about the television show that their child is watching and how producers can use the system to annotate television programs. With the parents' trap, producers can enable content designs into a television program and make them accessible to teachers, parents, and children. As a result, parents get additional information about a television program that may help them guide conversations with their children. This additional information can be localized to their communities and might also

suggest nearby places to visit that may relate the show they have just watched to what they have learnt. In short, the system tries to help children learn from television modeling conversation and question-asking strategies for parents and providing content development guidelines for producers. Educational television is defined as "programming that furthers the positive development of children between the ages of 1-16years including the child's intellectual/cognitive or social/emotional needs. (Alabi, 2004).

Jordan (1998), Jordan and Woodward (1997) Schmitt, (1999) in their work outline four criteria for evaluating the strength of children's educational programs in these ways:

1. **Lesson clarity:** Is the lesson clearly laid out so that the target audience can easily comprehend it? Is the message explicitly conveyed?

2. **Lesson salience:** Is the lesson content conveyed throughout the program? Is it an integral element of the program as a whole? Does the program give multiple viewpoints and examples for given issues so that it might be understood under many different circumstances?

3. **Lesson involvement:** Is the lesson presented in such a way that it is engaging and challenging for the target audience? Can the audience relate to the characters portrayed in the program? Is the lesson at the right experience level for the audience?

4. **Lesson applicability:** Is lesson conveyed is such a that the target audience ca its usefulness in their own li Is the lesson realisti applicable is the audi members' lives. Some of t criteria seem to be more a the lesson to frame within a s rather than about the structu rationale of the lessons con Such regulations often resu television programs with production standards recei story educational ratings e though they do not necessa benefit viewers. In other wo programs end up being structured and produced with necessarily having str educational content (i.e. have viewers benefited anythi Additionally, these guidelines more evaluative t prescriptive. That is, they h producers evaluate the quality programs, but they lack crit that producers might need du the design and product process. It is during this proc and even before, at the progra conception when it is crucial content to be questioned a justified.

Guidelines for producing educatio television that emphasises cont instead of access might increase amount of quality programming children. If producers can be reflecting on their use of content, th may become better equipped communicate educational interaction parents and children. With this

information, parents can play a large role in mediating television viewing and involving their children whom will assist them in learning that will have positive effects on achievement and motivation (Alabi, 2004). To take advantage of these effects we can model conversations between parents and children around television viewing. However, we must recognize that one issue for children's television is not scheduling, but whether the proper educational interventions are being used with television. These interventions can be improved by remembering that television is a social medium. If we can influence parent/child communicating then perhaps television can become a more powerful tool for learning.

Conclusion

This paper gives information to parents helping their children learn about the pedagogical content and structure of the program their children watch. This research has models inquiring strategies so that parents can initiate dialogues with their children around television, transforming the television from mere passive learning medium into an active learning experience. The type of interactions that occur as a result of their interactions will hopefully encourage parents to co-view other programs with their children, using the pedagogical strategies modeled in the parent traps, some of which apply to classroom teaching methods as other educational techniques to television. Since question asking benefits learning, we try to structure the tools towards inquiry, modeling question asking and answering technique. To generate inquiry based

information for parents, television producers are given guidelines which ask them to describe why content decisions are made and how alternative viewpoints can be presented. These guidelines hold producers accountable for the educational quality of their programs by asking them to explicitly describe and justify the lessons and pedagogical methods they use to create content.

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