

## School on the Air

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JOHN W. GUNSTREAM

RADIO TODAY is a great instrumentality of education. With its vast array of drama, music, forums, interviews, worldwide news reports and commentaries, and specialized school broadcasts, radio is potentially as important a medium of education as the school itself. This is a fact which teachers, parents, and the public in general should recognize.

The application of radio to the processes of public education in Texas has progressed rapidly and successfully since the organization of the Texas School of the Air in 1939 by the State Department of Education, Texas A. and M. College, North Texas State Teachers College, Texas State College for Women, Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers, and other recognized institutions and organizations.

Beginning as a cooperative undertaking without state funds, the Texas School of the Air became, in a period of two years, a state-financed division of the State Department of Education. It has now won acceptance by educators as an integral part of public education in this state and was utilized last year by more than 70 per cent of Texas schools.

The purpose of the Texas School of the Air is to present, through the cooperation of educators and broadcasters, educationally and socially desirable radio programs to supplement and enrich the school curriculum and to contribute to adult education. The programs themselves are especially designed to bring to the classrooms of the public schools educational content and values which the

teacher, because of lack of time or ability, or both, cannot herself provide.

Carried as a sustaining public service feature by a statewide network of radio stations, comprised of WFAA, Dallas; WBAP, Fort Worth; WOAI, San Antonio; KPRC, Houston; KRGV, Weslaco; KTSM, El Paso; and WTAW, College Station, the Texas School of the Air broadcasts are available to all the schools of the state, with the exception of a few isolated areas.

### *Providing a Balanced Fare*

The curriculum includes five classroom series in the five major core areas of the public school instructional program. Each classroom series is planned by a committee of selected teachers and authorities in the subject matter areas covered by the broadcasts. The gradation of the five series provides for suitable broadcasts for each grade level in the public schools as well as for adult listening.

Production of all programs is under the direction of trained and efficient broadcasters, and the greatest care is exercised to make every broadcast a finished radio

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*"Radio in education in Texas," writes John W. Gunstream, director of the Texas School of the Air, "is no longer a fad or a frill, if, indeed, it ever was." In the brief span of two years, the Texas School of the Air grew from a cooperative venture to a division of the State Department of Education, where it is today accorded a vital role in public instruction. On these pages Mr. Gunstream describes how the School is organized, who prepares the programs, what the programs are about, and how their results are evaluated.*

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performance. The University of Texas produces two of the series; North Texas State Teachers College and Texas State College for Women, one; Texas A. and M. College, one; and one is by a special radio workshop of the Texas Association for Childhood Education and Radio Station WBAP at Fort Worth.

The Texas School of the Air begins each year during the first week in October and continues for twenty-eight weeks, with a two-week Christmas recess. The broadcast hour for each series is 11:15 to 11:30 A.M., Monday through Friday.

The weekly schedule of broadcasts is designed to provide a balanced educational fare. *Your Story Parade* (Monday) is patterned for pre-school and primary children, presenting in dramatic form selected children's stories. *Open Your Eyes* (Tuesday) is a natural science series for upper elementary grades, based on the elementary curriculum. *Reading Is Adventure* (Wednesday) is a language arts series for junior and senior high schools designed to stimulate wide and selective reading. *Jobs Ahead* (Thursday) is a vocational guidance series for senior high school students and adults. Primary emphasis in this series is placed upon vocations peculiar to Texas. *Music Is Yours* (Friday) is tailored especially to bring rich and varied musical experiences to upper elementary and junior high school pupils. In all of the series proper consideration has been given to wartime interests and needs.

#### *Checking on Use and Value*

Classroom utilization of the programs is given special attention by the regular supervisors of the State Department of Education. Carefully prepared teachers' manuals are made available without cost. Each of the series has its own special

listening and evaluating committee, made up of selected teachers and authorities in radio techniques. It is the function of each committee to listen to the broadcasts in its assigned series, and to report on the suitability of the subject matter presented and the effectiveness of the script writing and production. Every effort is made to improve each series in keeping with the needs and interests of the vast school audience.

Cumulative reports from all sections of the state provide convincing evidence that the Texas School of the Air is making increasingly important contributions to the instructional program. It has become a potent force in helping teachers to realize the broader purposes of education; it is enriching and vitalizing classroom instruction in science, social science, music, literature, and vocations; it is giving emphasis and direction to the school curriculum; it is making the schools more effective in the area of democratic citizenship; and it is making the school day more enjoyable for thousands of teachers and pupils.

Moreover, the Texas School of the Air is becoming an important agency of adult education, as evidenced by radio station surveys. Recently, Governor Coke R. Stevenson said, "I consider this program one of the most effective in the combined field of adult and child education. Your choice of subjects and methods of presentation make this series one of the outstanding public service features in the State." In several of the large centers of the state, radio councils have been organized to promote adult listening to the Texas School of the Air.

Radio in education in Texas is no longer a fad or a frill, if, indeed, it ever was. It is here to stay, as another weapon in the arsenal of education.

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