A three-month summary of the production and programming activities of the Children's Television Workshop, producer of Sesame Street and The Electric Company, is presented. Special programming for the mentally retarded and for ethnic groups, ongoing research efforts, and community support activities are summarized. Projected budget figures from October 1, 1975 to June 30, 1976 and news stories from 11 newspapers are included. (NR)
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TITLE: QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

SUBMITTED TO: OFFICE OF EDUCATION, BUREAU OF RESEARCH #R080475F

GRANT NUMBER: G00-75-00078

PERIOD: October 1, 1975 to December 31, 1975

NAME OF INSTITUTION: Children's Television Workshop
One Lincoln Plaza
New York, NY 10023
(212) 595-3456

PROJECT DIRECTOR: Mrs. Joan Ganz Cooney

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Researchers continued work on the Sesame Street Curriculum Renorming Study. This study, currently in the testing stage, was designed to measure present competence levels of the Sesame Street target audience with the Sesame Street curriculum. The following stages of the study were completed during the October-December quarter of 1975:

1. UNCO Corporation of Washington, D.C., completed pretesting program with sample test items. Pretest report completed and submitted.

2. Sesame Street researchers met with UNCO staff to select items for final version of the test.

3. Revisions of test items and artwork were completed; test was printed.

4. Sesame Street researcher Emily Findlay designed a coded data sheet for teachers to use in the administration of test items.

5. Sesame Street researchers traveled to Washington, D.C., to attend a test-training seminar and to discuss data treatments with UNCO staff.

6. Test administration begun; at the time of this report, it was about half completed.

This study will be completed during the first quarter of 1976.

Sesame Street researchers designed and completed a program of formative testing of program segments taped in New Mexico. These segments were designed to give a fresh look to the program and to focus on the emotions involved in entering social groups. An attempt was also made to present a distinctive culture, different from Sesame Street's usual inner-city culture, in a positive light. Researchers performed testing to investigate children's attention to and comprehension of these pieces.
Researchers worked intensively with Barbara Kolucki, a student of Dr. Abraham Tannenbaum of the Special Education Department, Teachers College, Columbia University. Ms. Kolucki is under contract with the Children's Television Workshop to develop a taxonomy of educational objectives and television treatments which will help researchers to order and evaluate existing and new Sesame Street segments for their usefulness to mentally retarded children. The taxonomy has been developed and is now being revised and refined.

Researchers compiled data to amend the Sesame Street Pictureable Word List. This document informs book editors, magazine feature creators, and others, how children characteristically label pictures of familiar items. It is important to know, for example, that in a feature meant to teach the letter H, that most children will not spontaneously label a picture of a horse as a "Doggy."

The pictureable word list was amended with test results obtained from child testing pictures of items representing 130 simple words.

A new staff of student interns was interviewed and selected for the Spring semester, 1976. The students, affiliated with colleges and universities in New York and New Jersey, will receive training in formative research practices and methods, and will also be awarded academic credit by their host institutions.

Sesame Street researchers assembled a panel of experts to review segments which have thus far been produced in the format of the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation's Play to Grow activities. These segments model simple physical activities for mentally retarded children to practice with parents, teachers, siblings, or peers. The segments, each introduced by a distinctive logo, are scheduled for presentation during the first twenty minutes of each Wednesday Sesame Street program.

These segments were reviewed by Mr. Herbert Kramer and Ms. Joan Smith of the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation, by Mrs. Bebe Bernstein, Director of the New York City CMBD Program, Dr. Brickner of the University of Miami. These meetings yielded production guidelines and additional Writers Notebook suggestions for producers to use in preparing materials in the future.
Researchers continued the ongoing process of review which is applied to scripts, animation storyboards, and the production videotaping process.

Researchers assembled data regarding a class of segments referred to as the "George's Farm" format. Producers were advised regarding the workability of this format in the past, and a recommendation to produce further such segments was offered.

Researchers met with Dr. Gerald Lesser, Head of CTW's Research Advisory Committee, and with Jon Stone, Executive Producer of Sesame Street, to discuss curriculum additions and revisions for Sesame Street's eighth broadcast season.

**DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES**

**October 3, 1975:** Sesame Street researchers presented a seminar wherein Dr. Ken O'Bryan and Tim Hodapp, researchers from the Ontario Institute of Education, discussed results of their eye-movement research on Sesame Street problem-solving and classification segments.

**October 7, 1975:** A researcher discussed formative research methods with a guest researcher from India.

**October 7, 1975:** A researcher met with Leslie Halliwell, Head of Granada TV, one of the independent broadcasters in Britain.

**October 14, 1975:** Mr. Kale, guest researcher from India, accompanied Sesame Street Researchers to a research site to observe testing methods.

**October 16, 1975:** Meeting between researchers and Dr. Charles Steinberg of Hunter College, to discuss the Sesame Street research internship program.

**October 17, 1975:** Associate Director of Research visited Dr. Robert Liebert of Stony Brook University to explore new research methods and ongoing projects.

Sesame Street researchers discussed projects with several student and faculty visitors representing various academic institutions.
November 6, 1975: A Sesame Street researcher gave a presentation before an Education seminar at Stony Brook University.

November 20, 1975: Associate Director met with Dr. Tony Bates, Director of London's Open University.

November 20, 1975: Associate Director met with Ms. Diana Bander, producer of a Brooklyn College Television special about learning disabilities.

December 4, 1975: Sesame Street researchers met with a panel of experts in special education to review newly-produced Sesame Street segments for mentally retarded children.

Associate Director made a trip through New England to discuss research methods and studies with:

1. Dr. Glen Brickman, Motive Research Laboratory, Providence, Rhode Island
2. Dr. Aimee Leifer and Ms. Barbara Flagg, Harvard Center for the Study of Education in Television
3. Dr. Dan Anderson, Dr. Jennings Bryant, and Dr. Bernadette Nelson-Shapiro of the University of Massachusetts
4. Dr. Robert Krull, Remallaler Polytechnic Institute, and Dr. James Watt, University of Connecticut

OTHER ACTIVITIES

International: Associate Director screened segments from Sesame Street.

Products Division: Product testing and/or review was provided for the following items:

1. Oscar Card Game
2. Four coloring books
3. Memory Game
4. Pop-Up Book: Where's Cookie Monster, Sesame Street Mother Goose
5. Bookmobile books
6. Friends Industries Sesame Street crafts
7. Milton Bradley Puzzles
8. Floor puzzles
9. Big Bird Jack-In-the-Box
10. Institutional Division filmstrips
11. Sesame Street Pair Game

As in the past, ongoing research was continued on the Sesame Street Magazine.

Community Education Services: Researchers helped to create guidelines for producing the CES Sesame Street Activities Manual. Researchers continued to review Sesame Street Program Highlights.

STAFF UTILIZATION

Ms. LaMarian Hayes was promoted to Assistant Director, Sesame Street Research

FUTURE ACTIVITIES PLANNED

1. Further curriculum development for Sesame Street's eighth broadcast season.
2. Completion of Sesame Street Curriculum Renorming Study.
3. Completion and application of Barbara Kolucki's taxonomy.
4. Formative research on selected new Sesame Street segments produced for the seventh broadcast season.
5. Formative research designed to investigate the effectiveness of existing Sesame Street segments with mentally retarded children. Characteristic format will be examined for their ability to elicit attention and comprehension from mentally retarded children.
SESAME STREET PRODUCTION

MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The quarterly period of September through December 31, 1975, was spent in the writing of scripts, casting, and the preparation of all productions elements for the second half (January-March) of the Sesame Street taping season.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES PLANNED

During April, remote taping of five Sesame Street shows will take place in Louisiana in preparation for next season.
THE ELECTRIC COMPANY RESEARCH

MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The completion of a study of responses of preschoolers to The Electric Company. A final report is due on January, 1976. The continuation of a project to do a content analysis of all The Electric Company segments. Also the continuation of a project to investigate possibilities for teacher intervention to enhance the classroom effectiveness of The Electric Company.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND FINDINGS

The initiation of an Eye-Movement research program in conjunction with Harvard University. Initial projects to be conducted by The Electric Company including an evaluation of responses of preschoolers to The Electric Company and an evaluation of the visual responses of poor readers to The Electric Company with and without introduction of a "learning set" prior to viewing.

The continuation of a Pre-school Transition Study. The data is being collected and analyzed. A final report will be completed by January, 1976.

DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

A formal presentation of all eye-movement findings was prepared for delivery in January of 1976.

A member of The Electric Company Research Division served as guest lecturer at Teachers College, Columbia University, on the topic of research in children's television.

A special presentation was made by The Electric Company Research Division to Swedish delegates from National Television on the CTW model of Research.

A member of The Electric Company Division sat in at the oral defense of an OISE Student who completed a dissertation on The Electric Company.

A proposal to explore the use of foreign language co-productions for the teaching of foreign languages in the U.S. was developed with Middlebury College.

A member of The Electric Company Research Division presented a paper on directions in children's television at the National Association for the Education of Young Children in Dallas, Texas on November, 1975.

An interview was given to Newsweek magazine on The Electric Company.

The development of The Electric Company and its research was presented to Jennie McKenzie, Director of Research, for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation during this period.

The proposal for the Spanish language version of The Electric Company for possible co-production has been reworked during this period.

DATA COLLECTION

A three-phased study of children's responses to the humor on The Electric Company program was conducted.

An investigation of the appeal of characters and formats used on The Electric Company is now in progress.

Field testing of new animation techniques for The Electric Company is also underway. Post-hoc data on reading achievement has been initiated in Alcoa, Tenn.
OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Electric Company Research Department has participated in the development of filmstrips by CTW and Guidance Associates for kindergarten through 3rd grade.

A systematic schedule for research production interaction in connection with The Electric Company magazine has been started.

Plans for the development for bilingual in-school materials based on both Sesame Street and The Electric Company have been confirmed.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES PLANNED

The Electric Company Research Department will play a major role in a presentation on instructional television at AERA convention in San Francisco, in April.

The Electric Company will also participate in the International Conference on Evaluation and Research in Milton Keynes England, in April, 1976.
MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

From October 13 through December 19, the last half of the fifth season was taped at the studio.

DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

Weekly studio production meetings and general production staff meetings relating to the taping of the show were held during this period.

DATA COLLECTION

The Production Department is continuing to help the outside study on ways in which a specific teacher's role can be programmed into the series.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES PLANNED

The last half of the fifth season will be edited in February. Writer and general staff meetings beginning on the first of February will be held to discuss the sixth season.
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Sesame Street embarked upon its seventh season with curriculum and production innovations that include its first outdoor-based programs (in the Rocky Mountains) experimental programming for mentally retarded children and educational contributions to the nation's bicentennial.

The Electric Company entered its fifth season in this period and Public Affairs completed a press package and a five year historical summary of the project and distributed it to television and education editors and writers. The division also created and distributed to public television stations a set of photographs of their use in bringing the 1975-76 Electric Company season to the attention of educators, children and parents.

Public Affairs created and distributed a "photo album" describing the first location videotaping of Sesame Street, as told through the eyes of Big Bird. This featured the cast visit among Spanish-speaking Americans and Indians in New Mexico.

A press package describing the new season's experiments was also prepared and distributed to television and education editors and writers plus public broadcasting stations. Screenings were conducted for television and education writers in several cities and interviews arranged with the appropriate production and research personnel.

Public Affairs disseminated information about Sesame Street's bicentennial-related episodes linking the program to official activities of the American Issue Forum (the only nationwide treatment of bicentennial themes devoted strictly to preschoolers).
SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND FINDINGS

A major new experiment is the production and research of materials for mentally retarded children shown each week this season. Public Affairs worked with the research, production and community education divisions and the Kennedy Foundation in calling attention to this new curriculum, including distribution of a story about the experiment to specialized educational publications, distribution of a similar story in the general press package, and photography to illustrate the new curriculum.

Sesame Street’s visit to New Mexico resulted in its first location interaction with Spanish-speaking Americans and American Indians. Buffy St. Marie, the Indian singer-composer, also joined the regular hosts this season and Public Affairs distributed photographs and a story about her to the general press as well as numerous Indian publications.

The description of the new experiments resulted in widespread commentary and coverage.

Public Affairs also assisted the Research Division in the graphic design and printing requirements for a test book, and began working with that unit on a newsletter that will report on research findings at CTW. It also worked with the research and advisory staff on responding to educators and journalists interested in learning more about a critical study of earlier studies of Sesame Street by the Educational Testing Service.
The Community Education Services Division (CES) is charged with the responsibility of reaching out to initiate activities leading to the use of Sesame Street and The Electric Company as a supplemental, resource in formal and informal settings. The following descriptions are selected highlights of CES activities during the October through December, 1975 period.

SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS

Sesame Street has embarked upon experimental programming designed to teach mentally retarded youngsters. This new direction is an effort to reach the country's estimated six million mentally retarded youngsters. The target audience consists of children whose mental age approximate's that of a three to five year old. The special segments are based to a large extent on the "Families Play to Grow" program of the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation and include physical activities with some simple cognitive skills added. The Community Education Services Division is coordinating a nationwide effort to alert parents and teachers to the many possible applications of these programs and encouraging post-viewing learning reinforcements activities.

In the western region, CES focused upon contacting the directors of special education within schools systems and utilizing them as a focal point for the distribution of material to teachers, parents and agencies concerned with mentally retarded children.
The following school and school related organizations are cooperating with CES in this effort:

Los Angeles Unified School District
Los Angeles Country Schools
Compton Public Schools
San Diego Public Schools
California State Department of Education
Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation
California State Federation of Council for Exception Children
California Association for the Retarded
Valley Instructional Television Association of Sacramento
KQED - TV of San Francisco
Honolulu School District
KCTS - TV of Seattle
Seattle Public Schools
Yakima Public Schools
Spokane Public Schools
Olympia Public Schools
Tuscon Public Schools
Las Vegas Public Schools

Through these contacts and the dissemination of material to parents, teachers and others the CES Regional Coordinator is building an audience for the experimental programming for mentally retarded children. Following this period of alerting and informing concerned individuals and organizations, the CES Coordinator will engage in a series of workshops explaining the goals of the curriculum and suggested methods of reinforcing the content of the broadcast in the post-viewing situations. The activities conducted by the CES Coordinator in the western region are illustrative of the efforts of CES staff in other areas of the country.
The Community Education Services Division in cooperation with the Universidad Boricua of Washington, D.C., an experimental post secondary institution designed to serve people of a Hispanic origin, conducted a ten week course for students, parents, teachers and others working with young Spanish speaking children. This pilot project used Sesame Street and The Electric Company to demonstrate the use of television as a supplementary educational resource, for Spanish speaking children. The curriculum included units on:

- An Understanding of Television
- Educational TV as a Learning Resource
- Parent Involvement in Using TV as a Learning Resource
- The Local Spanish Speaking Community and Early Childhood Education
- Using Sesame Street and The Electric Company in the Home or in Day Care Centers
- Reinforcement Activities with Children

The course was structured to provide a mix of classroom lectures, discussions and practical "hands on" experience working with children. Due to the enthusiastic response to this project, it is anticipated that the Universidad Boricua will repeat the course and conduct a similar project through its affiliate in New York.

The Community Education Services staff in cooperation with the Massachusetts Educational Television Authority initiated the development of a reading comic strip to complement the basic reading skills taught on The Electric Company. The reading comic strip will appear in the Sunday comic section of the Boston Globe for thirty consecutive weeks, beginning in the early part of December 1975. The strip is designed to motivate children to learn basic reading skills through a high interest comic strip using The Electric Company characters and a "cast of children set in Boston and surrounding locales."
The primary emphasis is upon actively involving the children; parent participation that is encouraged through a brief weekly section of teaching tips for parents.

The staff members in conjunction with the Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools serving the Choctaw tribe in Philadelphia, Mississippi developed a project utilizing Sesame Street and The Electric Company. Workshops were conducted for the pre-school staff and the K-3 staff. Both staffs have enthusiastically adopted the use of CTW productions as supplementary resources. The programs will be viewed on a daily basis by approximately 50 preschoolers and 200 K-3 students. In the K-3 classrooms space has been set aside as an Electric Company activity area. As a follow up to this project, CES is conducting exploratory discussions with the tribal chief about the use of The Electric Company as a resource for functionally illiterate adult tribe members.

Another element of the CES outreach to Native Americans was a two day workshop conducted for Indian Education Training, Inc., in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Indian Education Training, Inc., is a non-profit organization set up to provide educational services and information to Indian parent groups, Indian educators, teachers, school administrators, and tribal organizations. The participants in workshops were trainers employed by Indian Education. The trainers provided services to the Navahoes and Pueblos in Arizona and New Mexico and other tribes in the Southwest. The objective of the workshop was to equip them with the information and skills necessary to train other groups, in the use of CTW productions as supplementary resources.

The staff members of the California office has developed a project with the State Motor Vehicle Bureau. The bureau provides child care
services for employees with preschool children. In order to broaden the educational options available to the preschoolers, CES is promoting the use of Sesame Street as a supplementary resource with the staff of the Sacramento Child Care Center. It is anticipated that this center will serve as a pilot site for the other centers on the Motor Vehicle Bureau.

The Community Education Services Division and members of the School Volunteer Service (SVS), conducted two workshops for a total of three hundred parents in New York City. The objective of the workshops was to demonstrate simple inexpensive activities that could be carried on at home, to reinforce the educational goals of CTW productions. These workshops grew out of a two day training session, conducted for SVS staff in the first quarter. The CES Regional Coordinator and national staff, as indicated in the foregoing highlights of their activities continue to be the major technical resource for CTW to reach out directly to teachers, parents and others involved in the education of preschoolers and young children in formal and informal settings.

**DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES**

During the October through December 1975 period, CES staff disseminated information about CTW at conferences and exhibits with the following agencies and institutions interested in the range of services provided by CES:

Conferences of the Association of Puerto Rican School Workers (NYC)

Action for Children's Television Fifth National Symposium on Children and Television (Atlanta, Georgia)

Conference of the North Carolina Association for the Education of Young Children (Winston Salem, North Carolina)

State Convention of the Texas Foster Parent Association (Dallas, Texas)
Conference of the Intercultural Development Research Association on the State of Education for Black Children and Youth in Texas (Dallas, Texas)

South Alabama State Fair (Montgomery, Alabama)

Governor's Conference on Education (Jackson, Mississippi)

Conference of the Alabama Federation of the Council for Exceptional Children (Montgomery, Alabama)

Convention of the Arkansas Association of Teachers (Little Rock, Ark.)

Conference of the California Federation of the Council for Exceptional Children (San Diego, California)

California Junior State Convention (Los Angeles, California)

PEOPLE UTILIZATION

During the period of October through December 1975, no new hires or terminations were done.
### Financial Status Report

#### 1. Federal Agency and Organizational Element
- **Department of Health, Education & Welfare, Off. of:**

#### 2. Name and Address of Grantee Organization
- **Children's Television Workshop**
  - One Lincoln Plaza
  - New York, New York 10023
  - **EIN:** 13-2655731
  - **S.S/TEC/76:** 76

#### 3. Project Period (Month, Day, Year)
- **From:** 1
- **To:** 6-30-76

#### 4. Programs - Functions - Activities

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13. Certification - I certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief this report is correct and complete and that all outlays and unpaid obligations are for the purpose set forth in the grant award documents.

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Signature of Authorized Official: [Signature]

Date Report is Submitted: 1/21/76
Shape Up or Ship Out!

The names of all 15 things in this puzzle begin with sh. Can you find them? (Words read across or down.) We've found shower for you.

We've hidden an extra word in the puzzle. What is it? (Hint: Look at the puzzle shape.)

shower
shelf
shell
shadow
shampoo
sherd
snawl
shamrock
shirt
shears

The New York Times, Tuesday, December 2, 1975

TV: 'Sesame Street' Takes Some New Directions

By JOHN J. O'CONNOR

Bicentennial Themes and Visits Are Used

Chicano family in the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico. Using the real-life Romo family as the family of Luis, one of the regular series characters, the five episodes are filmed on location. Jon Stone, executive producer, believes that by presenting children in the settings where they live, we add realism and dramatic impact to our goal of teaching about different cultures.

Perhaps, but the 'Sesame Street' format also gets a healthy injection of badly needed variety. The switch to a rural setting opens the way for introducing new characters and situations. Gordon learns how to milk a cow. Big Bird makes new friends in a chicken coop. The Spanish-speaking family and the American Southwest are used most attractively.

One of these shows features a trip to an Indian pueblo. The guide is the singer Buffy Sainte-Marie, who has composed several songs for the program. The trip and brief tour of Indian music and language are handled with skill and imagination. Miss Sainte-Marie will appear as a guest on other programs during this season, and 'Sesame Street' is already planning to take further trips out of the studio. It should. This one works beautifully.

The third major new element in the series this season is one on which the producers are moving very cautiously. This is a collection of special segments, to be presented each Wednesday during the first 20 minutes of the program, aimed at children with learning disabilities. Based largely on research developed by the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation, the segments include physical activities mixed with some simple cognitive skills. There is no question that such efforts are laudable for television. With a target audience of youngsters whose mental ages approximate 3 to 5 years old, 'Sesame Street' is attempting to reach the country's six million mentally retarded children, for whom no special TV programming has been designed so far. Using handicapped children, the segments are limited to simple exercises, with a minimum of background clutter.

Two problems, though, are immediately apparent. At home, such children will need the participation of a parent. And it is still difficult to anticipate how the normal viewer will react to the inclusion of the special material. Only time and the enormous research connected with any 'Sesame Street' project will tell. Meanwhile, any work in this sensitive area demands encouragement.
"Sesame Street" Still Children's Favorite

BY THOM SHALES

1975 Los Angeles Times
Washington Post News Service

Washington — Big Bird runs for President on a platform of "birdseed for everybody" and kisses for all babies. But when the portly yellow fowl wins the election, and learns that people expect him to solve their problems and not just go rollerskating, he is visibly shaken.

"You mean," he says, "I can't do anything I want to, even if I'm on top?"

This lesson for Presidents as well as children is included in the second episode of the seventh year of "Sesame Street."

The ascent of Bird is one of several features on Bicentennial themes added to this year's show. There will be other new elements. For the first time, the cast will leave mythical Sesame Street and hit the road. Five shows were taped in rural New Mexico and will be shown the week of Dec. 22-26.

And so we find Big Bird riding on the back of a pickup truck with Oscar the Grouch nearby in his garbage can while everybody sings, "We're a long, long, long, long way from Sesame Street."

In New Mexico they learn what an "arroyo" is and how to milk a cow.

Also new on Wednesdays, will be special features geared to "learning-disabled" children. In addition, "inreach" learning programs built around the broadcast are being started in two Texas prisons, where volunteer inmates will tutor children of other inmates, and in an Arkansas workshop where English will be taught to young Vietnamese refugees.
"The Electric Company" has returned

The Electric Company has returned to WKAR-TV, Channel 23, Michigan State University's public television station, Monday through Friday at 11 a.m., with a repeat at 11 p.m., and Saturdays at 9 a.m. and 11 p.m.

The return of this popular series from the Children's Television Workshop is a direct result of public contributions to the nonprofit organization, People for Public Broadcasting. During PBS's March fund raising drive, contributors were asked to specify if they wanted their donations to go toward a program of this series. The question generated much support, in both dollars and enthusiasm, that Ch. 23 made the purchase of this program a high priority for the 1980-81 season.

Viewers familiar with the series will notice a few changes in the reading series, which is entering its fifth season on the air. There's a new Short Circus (the teen rock group), increased audience involvement and adventures and skits more adaptable to classroom use. A new character has been added - Spiderman, a comic book super hero. He doesn't talk on the program so viewers have to read what he is saying or thinking in the balloons over his head, much the way they would read his thoughts in a comic book.

Even with these changes, the goal of the series remains the same. The major emphasis is still the teaching of basic reading skills, second through fourth graders.

TV FOR CHILDREN

The cast of The Electric Company is shown en route to the new season that premiered Monday of this week: (left to right) Jim Boyd as J. Arthur Cranford; Morgan Freeman as Easy Reader; Hattie Winston as Valerie the Librarian; Luis Ayala as Dr. Doolittle; Rita Moreno as Pandora the Brat; Skip Hinton as Fargo North, Decoder; Judy Graubart as Jennifer of the Jungle; and Danny Seegren as Spider Man.

This is just a sample of the many characters played by the repertory cast within The Electric Company format, which uses entertainment as a vehicle for teaching important reading skills. The half-hour program, produced by the Children's Television Workshop, is seen twice each day and again on weekends on most of the 255 member stations of PBS (Public Broadcasting Service).

Locally The Electric Company can be seen Monday-Friday at 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. and Saturday at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.
'Electric Company' Opens Season

The involvement of kids in the reading lessons of 'The Electric Company,' TV's acclaimed reading series, takes on added importance in the 1975-76 season as its seen rock group the 'Short Circus,' with new members and new sounds, plays a new central role in encouraging in-school and at-home viewers to get turned on to reading.

Also to be seen in the series' fifth season, which opens today, will be some genuine grade school pupils taking part in a number of teaching sequences and a "more readable" Spider-Man netting a whole crop of new arch-villains.

The Emmy award-winning series, produced by the Children's Television Workshop opens its season on WMHT-TV, Channel 31 and WSHV-TV, Channel 9. Most of the member stations air the half-hour program twice daily, once during school hours for classroom use and once in late afternoon for home-viewing and reinforcement.

World-wide: The Electric Company is having an increasing impact. Great Britain this year became the 17th English-speaking nation to adopt the series. To the general approval of British teachers and the press, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) aired a number of Electric Company programs in an experiment for the benefit of 10- to 16-year-old problem readers.

In the United States the series has had a measurable impact on its target audience of 7- to 10-year olds according to a two year study by the Educational Testing Service of Princeton, N.J. The second part of the study, conducted in The Electric Company's second season, revealed that many of the reading skills acquired by youngsters in their first year of viewing were still apparent a year later.

A recently reached agreement between PBS and CTW provides for the airing of The Electric Company through the 1980-81 broadcast season. According to David D.Connell, CTW vice president for production, the arrangement calls for two years of new production followed by four years of alternate repeats of these shows. Research and outreach activities related to the series will be continued through all five years and research findings at the end of that period will determine the future of the series.

Spider-Man, who debuted on the series last year and quickly became a viewer favorite, will be "more readable" in the fifth season. From the start the superhero has only communicated through comic book-like speech and thought balloons that encourage viewers to read Spider-Man's sentences in order to follow his actions.

JUSTICE TRIUMPHS—Spider-Man, the popular comic book hero who now appears on the TV reading series, "Electric Company," teams up with a villain named "Sandman" (Louis Avalos) and shares his results with viewers through a "thought balloon." The series in its fifth season airs in the daytime at 3:30 p.m. over WMHT.
Tv's 'Sesame Street' finds a new minstrel in Buffy St. Marie, she blends Indian rhythm with English lyrics and a level of charm.

Buff St. Marie is taking "Sesame Street" to the Indians and a prominent Indian, herself, to Sesame Street.

The versatile minstrel, armed with a mouth bow, original songs and a mission to present the "Indian reality" to a nationwide television viewing audience of young children, leads Big Bird and other Sesame Street characters to the 600-year-old Indian pueblo near Taos, N.M. this season.

Buff plays a key role in two "firsts" for Sesame Street during 1975-76: the first creation of programs on location and the first presentation of Indian culture on the "street" portions of the show.

Buffy's Sesame Street method is at once simple and complex; she composes and sings music that combines Indian rhythm and English lyrics. "I want to get an Indian feeling," she explains, "and at the same time I still want to be understandable to all children who watch Sesame Street."

A critic once described Buffy as "an aboriginal original blessed with a rare command of the powers that communicate. Her compositions and songs for Sesame Street demonstrate that she wants to combine Indian feeling with English lyrics."

"The problem in many places is that kids have only heard of Indians in stories, and for them to see Indians and Indian children in their own homes on television establishes very gently the Indian reality. I want to reach all children and that's why I chose to combine Indian feeling with English lyrics."

Ms. St. Marie and executive producer Stone began talking early in 1975 about how Sesame Street, which is seen by an estimated nine million youngsters, could best approach its first presentation of native American Indians. They agreed that the programming should convey a sense of feeling about Indians to non-Indian viewers that would be understood and appreciated by both groups of youngsters.

Ms. St. Marie, who devotes much of her time to correcting perjurous stereotypes about American Indians, describes her presence on Sesame Street as one effort to illustrate the uniqueness of Indians and the fact that they are human like everybody else. She says: "I'm trying to do this gap bridging which is essential to American contemporary life, to build mutual understanding on the level of charm."

She is back in a New York TV studio with her guitar, her mouth bow — and her charm. Instead of singing with Indian children in their homes, she is demonstrating Indian music and culture to the kids on Sesame Street — and playing "Buffy" as a regular guest host on the program.

She's making new friends there, too, including the Muppets. One of them, the compulsive enumerator Count von Count, helps solve the Cree number problem posed in New Mexico. The Count stopped counting at five, avoiding numbers of more than two syllables in the Cree language. So on Sesame Street this season, it's pawuk, nesoo, nisto.
Larger role for youth

Special to The Times

NEW YORK — The involvement of youngsters in the reading lessons of "The Electric Company," Public TV's popular reading series, takes on added importance in the 1975-76 season as its teen rock group, "The Short Circus," with new members and new sounds, plays a key role, in encouraging in-school and at-home viewers "to get turned on to reading."

Also to be seen in the fifth season, opening Monday are some genuine grade school pupils taking part in a number of teaching sequences and a "more readable" Spider-Man netting a whole crop of new arch-villains.

The Emmy-award winning series is produced by the Children's Television Workshop (CTW). Most of 256-member public stations including Chs 24 and 2 air the half-hour program twice daily, once during school hours for classroom use and once in late afternoon for home-viewing and reinforcement.

World-wide, "The Electric Company" is having an increasing impact. Great Britain this year became the English-speaking nation to adopt the series.

The general approval of British teachers and the press, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) aired a number of, "Electric Company" programs in an experiment for the benefit of 10- to 16-year-old problem readers. The experiment will be repeated next year.

In the U.S. the series has had a measurable impact on its target audience of seven- to 10-year-olds according to a two year study by the Educational Testing Service of Princeton, N.J.

The second part of the study, conducted in "The Electric Company's" second season, revealed that many of the reading skills acquired by youngsters in their first year of viewing were still apparent a year later.

A recently reached agreement between Public TV network and CTW provides for the airing of "The Electric Company" through the 1979-81 broadcast season.

According to David D. Connell, CTW vice president for production, the arrangement calls for two years of new ion followed by four years of repeats of these shows.

relations to the series will be continued through all six years and research findings at the end of that period will determine the future of the series. The Electric Company" research staff is evaluating all materials produced in previous seasons in order to include the most effective elements in the 250 programs created for airing during the next six years.

Spider-Man, who debuted on the series last year and quickly became a viewer favorite, will be "more readable" in the fifth season.

From the start, the super-hero has only communication through comic-book-like speech and thought balloons that encourage viewers to read Spider-Man's simple sentences in order to follow his actions.

In an experiment this season the balloon will expand to occupy most of the screen and become more readable and then disintegrate back to the action.

"What we're doing," said Andrew B. Ferguson Jr., the series' producer, "is giving the kids at home and in the classroom every chance to get involved with reading put words and sentences. In the case of, the expanding balloons the balloons block out potentially distracting elements so the viewers get a pure reading experience. The complexity of the print used is of course geared to the slow readers who are the core of our target audience."

The new "Short Circus" is like the old "Short Circus" in number only — five members — but four of the youngsters are new this year and new too is the group's central role in motivating viewers to acquire reading skills.

"Our studies have shown us," said Dr. Vivian Horner, series director of research, "that viewers can become actively involved in the program — actually work out reading elements on paper and in their heads — through participatory activities as long as we have believable kids on the screen taking part. In other words kids relate best to kids and the 'Short Circus' will reflect this in season five. They will also act as a youthful bridge between young viewers and the series' adult cast members.

"The types of material the kids will be doing," Dr. Horner continued, "will reflect recognition of the fact that the series is used extensively in the nation's elementary schools. 'The Short Circus' members will be modeling more behavior, frequently in games and other activities familiar to viewers but provided with a twist that draws them into the reading process."

"The Electric Company's" regular adult cast members include Oscar-and-Tony winner Rita Moreno, familiar to "Electric Company" viewers as Pandora (the brat); the movie director and the "Hey You Guys!" shouting Millie-the-Helper; Hattie Winston, who was last season in the new role of Valerie the Librarian (girl friend of Easy Reader) and who continues The Fox; Morgan Freeman, who has played the word-loving Easy Reader since the show first started (along with many other roles); and Luis Avalos, who sets modern medicine back centuries as the Dr. Doolittle and horticulture back an equal time span as Pedro of "Pedro's Plant Place."

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A head start?

'Sesame Street' characters get high marks from local teachers

**Ivette Durell**

Messenger-Inquirer Staff

Before the first grade, children who watched the program showed greater learning gains than children who didn't watch TV, regardless of whether they were from lower-income backgrounds or not. This was true for both boys and girls, black or white. The more children viewed the show, the greater their learning gains.

Maurita Poynter, a first-grade teacher at Evansville Elementary School, says she noticed that her students showed more interest in learning. "When they watch 'Sesame Street,' they are more focused," she says. "They ask more questions and are more active." Parents have also been pleased with the program, reporting that their children are more engaged in schoolwork.

Researchers at the University of California, San Diego, have found that children who watch 'Sesame Street' have better language and cognitive skills. This is true regardless of socioeconomic status.

"The program helps children to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills," says Dr. John de la Garza, a developmental psychologist at the University of California, San Diego. "It encourages children to learn from their environment and to think about the world around them."

Children who watch 'Sesame Street' are more likely to succeed in school, according to a recent study. The program has been credited with improving reading and math skills, as well as increasing vocabulary and problem-solving abilities.

Parents who use 'Sesame Street' as a learning tool have reported that their children are more interested in learning and are more likely to ask questions. The program has been praised for its ability to make learning fun and engaging for young children.

"It's a great way to introduce children to new ideas and concepts," says Dr. de la Garza. "It's also a great way to help children develop their critical thinking skills."

Another benefit of watching 'Sesame Street' is that it helps children to develop emotional intelligence. The program features a variety of characters, each with their own unique personality. This helps children to develop empathy and understanding of others.

"The program helps children to understand the perspectives of others," says Dr. de la Garza. "It encourages children to see things from different viewpoints and to develop their emotional intelligence."
Sesame's T.M. Visit to Focus
On Hispanic and Indian Cultures

Continued from page 25.

The Children's Television Workshop (CTW), which produces the series, is adding other innovations in the new season. It will get into the act on the Bicentennial, for instance, but its own way.

That includes Big Bird's campaign for President, with a pledge to turn the White House into a birdbath. There is information on how the notion developed along with the pants in CTW's American Issues Forum program featuring national dialogue on U.S. landforms.

The new fall winter will be weekly 9-11 p.m. (Eastern) for children with learning difficulties. The show already has been used in 75 centers of 80 children, so the CTW staff wants to produce 20-minute features especially for them.

Sesame Street can be seen this season on 57 PBS affiliates, and on commercial TV in 11 major "library" PBS stations. The country's United States audience is nine million households.

Fifty foreign nations broadcast the original English version. Several others have an "Open Sesame" series—shorter segments in the native language, reflecting local culture.

Viewers at home might be surprised at the unusual uses to which the show is put. A unique project this year is at federal prisons in Pa., New York and Seagoville, Texas, where CTW staff personnel helped train 57 inmates who volunteered to tutor the children of other inmates.

Most of the children have benefited from the tutoring, built around the series. And the inmate volunteers have gained experience in teaching that might be helpful in considering later career alternatives.

Another project is at Fort Chiswell, Va., where a CTW division is working with Johnson Community College to help Vietnamese children learn English via Sesame Street.

In "Washington," the same CTW division, with the University of Kentucky use Sesame Street to teach Spanish-speaking students and day care-center personnel how to use television as an educational tool.

But goal there is to develop a national project that can be adapted in Spanish-speaking communities around the United States.