

I have been an educator for twenty years - seventeen years with the Public Museum of Grand Rapids, ending my tenure there as the head of the education department. For the last three years I've been project manager of the MoLLIE project of the CMC's GRTV. In that capacity my staff and I teach area none profit organizations and school children to write, shoot, and edit their own curriculum-linked mini-documentaries for cablecast.

I've viewed much of the programming that has been identified as "educational" on the local television stations and I must say that I'm quite dissatisfied with the educational value of these programs. Most are characterized by empty platitudes wrapped in sub-par animation and writing, providing a mere vehicle for a deluge of advertising targeted toward children.

I'd challenge the local television stations to do better than that, and make this particular suggestion:

Our city is blessed with a wealth of cultural and natural history institutions each of which has an education department with educators eager to share their institution's educational message with a broader and more diverse audience.

The institutions would include - the Public Museum, Children's Museum, GRAM, Meijer Garden, John Ball Zoo, UICA, et. al. And these are only the educational institutions within the city, there are even more within the viewing area of each of the local television stations.

Modeling off of classic 1960s children's educational programming such as "Mr. Wizard", "Discovery" and "Explorer", I'd like to see a weekly 30 minute program utilizing the resources area cultural and natural education facilities including their educators. Use the actual educators of each institution to get the educational content across on camera in a manner that achieves both the educational mission of the institution as well as the curricular linkages mandated by the state and local school districts.

With the wealth of artifacts, animals, art, plants and experiential opportunities at each of these fine facilities the programs could be fun, exciting, keenly interesting and highly engaging for our area school children, and a credit to our local television stations.

Mannie Gentile