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### Watching TV Can Improve Intelligence

In the modern world, households in the most industrialized countries have a TV set as a major domestic appliance, which is so common that a household may seem incomplete without it. Television offers different types of programs, such as documentaries to teach about the world, advertisements for informative purposes, sports and cartoons for fun and relaxing, and weather forecasts for easy planning of daily activities. News reports are always live and updated. In fact, television covers the most important life aspects today. The current generation is inquisitive and likes learning; hence, they are in need of education and instructions. TV also shows real world and people's cultures; hence, it is one of the major sources of knowledge about the world. At the same time, television is the major controller of modern people's minds, and it is associated with many challenges for people's perception. Consequently, watching TV can improve intelligence, because viewers should make conclusions based on critical reasoning and watch TV attentively in order to understand not only explicit information but also hidden messages of various TV programs.

The sleeper curve portrays the image of the way that people are expected to give themselves a brain exercise when they are following a long TV show. Various programs expose

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issues of violence, ethnic stereotypes, and other topical problems; consequently, every viewer needs to be attentive in order to make the right conclusions. The sleeper curve is the major controller of mental development in the modern youth, because it enhances their cognitive abilities (Johnson). There is a tendency in society to expect the media to choose what they report and expose. As a result, TV producers prefer some topics to others with the aim of promoting some societal values and norms; hence, they always hide some truth. The most important thing is to follow TV show characters and plots and try to think of what can take place in the twist parts or during pauses and suspense moments. The structure of TV narrative is also an important determinant that requires a lot of cognitive effort to understand it. For example, in such a TV show as *24*, attention is required to make inferences and understand the characters' relationships (Johnson).

Indeed, modern culture continuously receives more cognitive demand. Johnson clearly explains that TV shows are very important, even though a certain show may seem insignificant. Consequently, any message, whether pleasing to society or not, makes the audience smarter. For example, watching *24*, the viewer just requires being fully aware of the flow of the show and understanding the twists and clues in the plot. In contrast, reality shows are exempt from intellectually stimulating effects, but they also provoke further thinking. Some shows require a lot of brain exercise making the viewers smarter by affecting the part of the brain associated with feelings. It creates the urge to dig deeper into the meaning of a show.

It is a fact that some shows reflect the real world and events that have taken place or are expected to happen. They always focus on real people, their personalities, motivations, and their relationships with others. Such shows combine color images and sound in a smooth manner to

resemble real life events. When some characters do not match, the viewers will not be able to follow a show. As a result, the act of critical thinking and suspense may not accomplish the intended motive. Because of such effects, changes and key themes may not be clear. Educational and cultural programs of this type are the major sources of information today. Creativity associated with the production of such shows is another aspect that makes television an important means of cognitive development. The thing is that the creation of film scripts requires a smooth combination of scenery, magnificent images, and dialogues (Johnson), which would not only please the viewers but also develop their aesthetic tastes.

In addition, modern TV shows are more demanding than shows of earlier periods of the twentieth century (Johnson). In the past, TV shows had simple structure and predictable rules of plot development. Consequently, they required less attention. However, plots have a great effect on the audience. Simple plot structure prevents one from thinking further, since it is plain and easy to understand. It numbs the mind. Since the 1980s, TV plots have changed gradually and developed some twists and turns, which require one to use critical thinking to interact well with such plots. Some dialogues and scenes are more complex now, but it is always easy to understand them, if one watches a show attentively. Modern TV shows are not simple to predict. For example, such shows as *Survivor* invite the audience for more engagement in order to follow up easily and make them develop more creative and critical thinking to understand. The comparison between old and today's complex shows through multithreading is used to rate understanding. The audience has embraced complex multithreaded dramas happily within the recent two decades. Today, a multithread technique is much enjoyed and celebrated by most viewers, and it is a clear indication of increased intelligence thanks to critical thinking that comes along with watching complex shows.

Television remains the most popular media today, and it is useless to struggle against it. Since there are so many positive cognitive effects of television, it is possible to use it for educational purposes. This idea corresponds to Gerald Graff's argument that students have to be able "to see their interests through 'academic eyes'" (386). If television and its products are among the major interests of young people, then educators must incorporate television in the process of learning. It is possible to enhance cognitive influence of television by suggesting students not only to watch a certain TV show but also offer them to analyze it critically and look for hidden messages, symbols, themes, or metaphors. Using television products for developing students' critical thinking skills can be very motivating (Graff 385), because it is easier for modern students to write about a popular TV show than about classical works of literature or philosophy. Instead of writing boring reports about the life and work of Plato, students could reflect on some postmodernist aspects in *Game of Thrones*, look for hidden criticism of various socio-political tendencies in *The Simpsons*, compare and contrast various TV shows, and so on. Although this idea may seem ridiculous to some conservative educators, it is important to understand that education must connect with modern life in order to be productive.

TV has always shown many programs for people to learn and developed their cognitive skills by connecting the flow of stories or episodes before coming to a certain conclusion. Many people assume that instead of reality the mass media portrays what people want to hear and see in order to please them. However, considering such shows as *24*, it is possible to conclude that there is a gradual change brought about by the fact that cognitive demands for culture gradually increase. People watch new things that they have never heard or seen before. Consequently, they have to analyze information through critical thinking to understand what is happening between characters of different shows. Furthermore, when watching news, people are normally in search

of knowledge about the current world; hence, they are seeking to be smarter. Students should use the non academic interests as part of their academics to understand various cultures, and obtain some living skills. He may lose interest in studying a particular academic book, but may have interest in a TV program that can have a great positive impact in relaxing and further improve the basis of argument regarding an issue. Since television is one of the most popular aspects of modern life, it is crucially important to use it in various learning activities.

Some programs like sports provoke more intellectual argument than school curriculum work. This activity leads to debates and challenging arguments for analysis among the fans, and this provokes use of intelligence to convince others about the chosen stand about it, giving reasons, unlike schools. A school culture may lead to insufficient use of intellectual need of the brain, and this can be clear by the fact that the street smarts outsmarts the book smarts in many fields. This makes the school culture appear boring, pale and unreal. The street smarts are able to meet community thirst, through interactions with different people from different parts of the society, who are likely to modify the way of personal reasoning and view on general life, unlike the school where such interaction is rare to find. Students are mainly confined to the school, family and friends environment, and this may dominate to a point of mind stagnation due to boredom. A good intellectual environment exist in the far world away from school, organized in a competitive way that, there are rivals in texting, interpretations, evaluation and theories, which eventually requires critical thinking to win. More so, it will provoke critical thinking, when trying to find the methods and systems to use in order to win.

Although many conservatives argue that television has purely destructive role, it is evident based on the above-mentioned arguments that television is not as evil as some people

may think. On the contrary, it has a number of positive effects on human conscious and can increase intelligence. Apart from providing the audience with useful information, television is capable of developing critical thinking skills, attention, and other cognitive competencies. The most negative effect of modern television is that it may lead to attention deficit disorder among young people. However, it is also possible to assume that the problem of attention deficit can be also provoked by the fact that modern curriculums very often do not correspond to students' interests and demands. That is why it is necessary to incorporate television products in modern educational activities. Combined with classical works of literature and philosophy, television could become a great means to develop students' interest to studying.

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