

I. Academic Review- Dorothy G. Singer and Jerome L. Singer

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A. Introduction-Characteristics of the Seven- to- Ten-Year-Old Child

Intellectual Development

Children, ages seven to ten, now can think out rather than act out solutions to problems, but they still are concrete and less able to deal with abstractions. Abstract thinking will emerge more fully as they approach adolescence. They are able to think more logically about things in distant time and space and are curious about how things work. They are learning other symbol systems besides language such as numbers, maps, signs, and graphs. Children of these ages use television as a main source of entertainment more than any other group. They also are challenged by the computer and use it for games as well as to some extent communications with friends.

Language skills are more advanced at this stage with a growth in vocabulary, both oral and written, and with a more complex use of language. Children in this stage take pleasure in role-playing, making up rhymes, songs and stories, tongue twisters, secret codes, riddles, and jokes. Magic, make-believe, and fantasy become increasingly private activities and may take the form of poetry, prose, and writing simple plays. Children now are able to control their behaviors through covert speech. Memory ability is increasing. Many children become great collectors. Special skills are now manifested through a growing interest in music, art, sports, science, nature, and crafts. The gains in reading play a major role in this period and are of paramount importance in order to master a variety of school subjects. There is constant improvement in communication skills through using opportunities to talk, listen, read, and write.

Social/Emotional Development

There is a growing sense of independence at ages seven to ten along with a sense of industry as demonstrated in planning and construction of projects. Children exhibit energy and eagerness to try to do new things, and to watch and to imitate people around them who are engaged in various occupations. Identification is mainly with family figures, teachers, religious leaders, and media-related characters as role models. Individuation in relation to the family begins and peers are now important, somewhat replacing adults as major source of behavior standards and recognition of achievement. Self-esteem is dependant on what peers think of one. Children are selective about close friends and may seek a permanent friend or even make an enemy. This is also an age when children begin to acquire some humorous cynicism, often mocking seeming pomposities or dogmatisms of their adult authorities. The self-concept is gradually forming through a growing self-evaluation according to parent and teacher criteria. Self is seen more in terms of social roles or labels such as age, sex, race, religion, and class. Interest in video and computer games is prevalent. Boys, especially, are attracted to the more action-oriented and violent forms of games. Division of interests by gender is developing in terms of play-styles and hobbies. Children become less egocentric, more empathic and share, take turns, and cooperate.

B. The Really Wild Animal Series in Relation to its Target Child Audience

Twelve Episodes Reviewed- (See section II for titles and objectives)

This series of videos on wild animals, birds, and insects in their natural environments is designed to engage the curiosity and developing intelligence of boys and girls in the beginning school years. There is a special emphasis on nature, science, the adaptation, and survival of species, and their role in human planetary welfare. Each episode examines topics of Geography, Ecology, and the ways in which non-humans; animals, birds and insects adjust to the complexities of their specific habitats in the various continents and oceans that make up our planet, Earth.

1. Reaching and Teaching

The episodes are designed specifically to engage the special cognitive and social/emotional capacities of this age group. The use of a humorous, playful representation of our globe in the form of *Spin*, voiced very clearly and in a lively “fun” manner by Dudley Moore is designed to create a story-like frame that is likely to attract this age group. *Spin* comes across as a sometime blundering storyteller who will appeal to children who are curious but also often somewhat inclined to be quizzical of the formalities of instruction. Dudley Moore with his clear speech and light tone seems to represent an excellent spokesperson that can present extensive information to children while avoiding a formal, didactic approach.

2 .Major Instructional Topics

The content of the episodes, while focused primarily on depictions of animals in their natural habitats, contain important subtexts that are regularly repeated in many shows. These include examples of the vast variability of living species on different continents with indications of the fact that all sizes and shapes of birds, animals, and insects demonstrate remarkable means of adjusting to often extremely difficult ecological circumstances. While children are easily attracted to the big animals like elephants, lions, crocodiles, the series calls continuing attention to the remarkable constructive abilities and seeming social complexity of tiny meercat felines, beavers with their dam and lodge building, ants in their complex societies and especially the amazing termite towers, and the elegant mating rituals of bower birds. For the viewers in this age group, facing first exposures to a wider world outside of their own families, the series presents a key educational opportunity. Children can learn about the unusual kinds of animal home-building, of how various species gather food, or are predators that must also protect themselves or their young, or how many survive only by remarkable migrations.

Because early school-age children are at the same time family-dependent, yet increasingly exposed to new settings, they sustain a strong interest in issues of childcare and safety. A recurrent feature throughout the series reflects issues of baby-care, and protection with examples of elephants

to tortoises, from wallabies to koalas. There are many instances about the habits and pranks of primates and monkeys that not only delight children but also offer an easy opportunity for identification.

At a more subtle level, there are continuing examples of animal life that may encourage children to think for the first time about critical issues of ecology and of the importance of preserving natural habitats for many species to survive in the face of widespread human incursions. The information about the beaver and the dam building of ponds stresses how this one animal contributes to the making an agreeable habitat for a variety of fish, fowl and insects. The critical importance for humans of preservation of tropical rainforest is well demonstrated in a manner easily grasped by this age group. Examples of humans as rescuers of endangered young animals are vividly presented. In Australia, the cute koala is often left homeless as the Eucalyptus trees that they depend on for food and shelter are cut down. Demonstrating how an orphaned, homeless koala is rescued by humans, nurtured, and then gradually returned to its habitat is a memorable example. Other comparable stories woven into episodes about baby pandas in China and even an orphaned black bear, nurtured by humans and then adopted by an unrelated mother are well presented. These vignettes appeal to the social and emotional feelings of the target viewers.

These many instances also may convey a first exposure of children to the interdependence of humans and animals. The series offer a useful array of examples for children of how we can understand, respect, and appreciate the world of the other living organisms that share our planet without anthropomorphosis of other creatures. The episodes still show the natural ways in which we as humans can relate to the many other living species. The many examples of scientific research, of human rescue and care facilities for species such as eagles and wild horses, and the importance of natural habitat preservation all bring children a sense of fellowship with the animal world and greater understanding of nature.

3. Supplementary Learning Opportunities

In addition to the major instructional thrusts of the series, there are some additional educational opportunities. Perhaps the most obvious is the area of expanded cognitive skills such as planning, problems solving, and, vocabulary. Unfamiliar words are explained by the host, and at times, supers on the screen help the viewer learn the names of animals or concepts such as migration pouch. Other cognitive skills are enhanced by the use of maps or names of continents. Children become acquainted with how the sensory modalities of vision, smell, and hearing are used by animals to recognize their young as in the case of the zebra. Even the sonar-like sounds by bats and other nocturnal animals are exemplified.

The uses of story segments within the episodes also are valuable for children, not only for sustaining interest but also as demonstration narrative thinking as a useful aid to memory. The baby wildebeest's survival over several hundred miles of migration is a fine instance. Broken into segments but carefully preserving story-continuity, it helps children practice how to recognize sequences and refresh memories.

At a more social level, the content of the many construction and childcare depictions demonstrates the value of cooperative behavior. The mother emu in Australia gives birth to eggs, but the father then sits on them, warming and guarding them, and oversees their hatching. The sharing of food and the nurturing of young in a great variety of animals, birds, aquaria, and insect species is powerfully demonstrated.

4. Humor, Music and Film Interstitials

A final feature supports the instructional value of these videos. There is some humor presented mainly in the comments, puns, and pratfalls of *Spin*. These reinforce points also brought out directly by *Spin* and by the repetition of lyrics in the songs. Children at this age very much enjoy rhymes that have been shown by research to be keys to literacy. The melodic tunes of the songs are also highly

attractive to all children. For example, in the episode on wild animals of North America, the song repeats: “I’ve got to be wild/ if I’m to survive/ I’ve got to be wild/ if I’m to stay alive!” This lyric not only points to the major theme of the episode, the importance of untamed species in their natural habitats, but also introduces and defines a new vocabulary word, “survive.” These features of music, rhyme, and humor help to create naturalness to the episodes that are like “the spoonful of sugar that makes the {educational} medicine goes down.”

II. Episode Descriptors with Their Objectives

1. *Swinging Safari* (21:24)

Meet Africa’s wild wanderers, from the Serengeti Plain to the Kalahari Desert. Lions, cheetahs, gazelles—and the small but just as amazing meerkats.

Objectives:

1. A survey of the continent of Africa emphasizing the great variety of animal life and the adaptation to the natural settings.
2. Learning about climatic changes from deserts to plains and how these climates affect the lives of the animals that dwell there.

2 *Amazing Africa*. (21:24)

More of Africa’s most wanted—zebras, crocodiles, elephants, and some fascinating insights into chimpanzees from Jane Goodall.

Objectives:

1. Understanding the intensive relationships of the varieties of animal families.
2. Learning about mother and baby relationships in terms of feeding babies, recognition of ones’ own baby, teaching babies to gather their own food. This is done by imitation.

3. *Wonders Down Under* (20:40)

Meet the marvelous marsupials of Australia. Kangaroos, koalas, and plenty of platypuses, dingoes, and other oddly evolved animals on the planet’s most isolated continent.

Objectives:

1. Learning about Australia’s unique situation as an island continent with unusual animals as found only there because of millions of years of separation from other continents.
2. Understanding the special features of marsupials and other animals in terms of their breeding, raising of babies and food habits.

4. Astounding Australia (21:24)

Experience more of the wacky animals that inhabit this isolated land. From wallabies to emus... Australia is full of fantastic evolutionary wonders.

Objectives:

1. To learn about the special qualities of Australian animals; the foods they eat, the homes they build.
2. To learn about the courting habits of some of the animals and the parental oversight of eggs and newborn.
3. To understand how humans intrude and endanger the species like the Koalas and their dependence on specific trees for food.
4. How rescue workers aid in the survival of the species.

5. Totally Tropical Rain Forest (21:30)

South America's rain forest has more animal species than any other place in the world. We visit the forest floor's most photogenic finds, from big hungry jaguars, to small leaf cutting ants, to odd-looking tapirs.

Objectives:

1. To learn about how a tropical rain forest is formed, its function, and its components of
 2. Understanding that layers exist in the rain forest and that specific forms of insects and animal life occupy each layer.

6. Rain Forest Romp (21:30)

Up in the canopy lives a whole new cast of characters: harpy eagles and other exotic birds, cats that live in the trees, and monkeys with weirder noses than anyone you know.

Objectives:

1. To learn about the rain forest canopy. What it is, how it is formed, and who lives there.
2. To learn about how the food chain operates.
3. Examination of the role of the Amazon River and how it influences animal and fish life with the emphasis on the importance of preserving the rain forest for the health of our planet.

7. Amazing North America (21:33)

A visit with the beasts of our home continent. From the polar bears up north to the snakes of the southern swamps, and lots of animals in between.

Objectives:

1. To learn about the great variety of wild animals that live in North America from ice regions in the north to southern swamps.
2. How survival depends on wildness and the need for animals to live in a natural untamed state.
3. To learn how creatures adapt to various environments through their special physical characteristics, food gathering methods, reproductive practices, and ways in which they make dwelling places.

8. North American Round-Up (21:30)

More furry friends from Mexico, the U.S., and Canada. Beavers, bears, alligators, and a squirrel going to battle with a rattlesnake.

Objectives:

1. To demonstrate more intensively the adaptive methods for survival, (turtles use of alligator nests for their own eggs, beaver dams creating ponds for the use of themselves and other animals).

2. How scientists can film wild animals through special techniques.

3 How humans can rescue baby animals that are hurt or lost and return them for adoption by another mother of their own species.

9. Awesome Animal Builders (23:37)

Watch as animals build homes with nothing but teeth, claws, and determination. Meet beavers, birds, termites, and naked mole rats as they build homes to stay safe and raise their families.

Objectives:

1. To learn how animals construct their own homes and why they do so.

2. To learn how the variations in nature including climatic differences and physical attributes of a particular region lead to animals engaging in elaborate constructions from termite towers to elaborate and huge spider webs.

10. Amazing Journeys (23:37)

Every year, many different species of animals pick up and move. Some do it to escape bad weather, like tundra swans, while others travel to lay their eggs, like the Pacific Salmon.

Objectives:

1. To learn the migration represents a form of animal adaptation to climatic changes and need for reproduction such as in the case of the salmon.

2. To learn how animals find out that they must migrate, where they can move to, and when they can return to familiar habitats.

3. To learn about the predators who may attack migrating animals (the baby wildebeest for example)

4. To indicate the role of humans in assisting some animals in migration (the swans)

11. Spin's Excellent Farmyard Safari (23:37)

Almost every animal you find on the farm has a wild cousin. The domestic sheep has the wild Dall sheep, the domestic horse has the wild mustang, and the big, fat, domestic pig has a much leaner and meaner wild cousin... the warthog.

Objectives:

1. To learn that some domestic animals had wild ancestors and current relatives who continue to live in the wild.
2. How the use of sight, smell, and hearing help animals recognize their offspring.
3. A comparison of wild and domestic animals with the question of which way of life is more beneficial for the animal.

12. Animal Rescuers (23:37)

Meet people who are doing all they can to protect and preserve the endangered animals of the world. From white rhinos to cute and cuddly koalas, a handful of people are doing all they can to protect these threatened animals.

Objectives:

1. To understand how humans can play a valuable role in caring for wild and domestic animals that are injured or in difficulties because of environmental changes or because of predators.
2. How human incursions in forests or through animal poaching can undermine the continuation of a species....and what can humans do to help preserve natural habitats.

Deep Sea Dive (21:30)

A look at some of the very weird creatures who live in, on and around the oceans of our planet. Big fish, little fish, non-fish, and dolphins -- who just might be as smart as we are.

Beach Party Splash (21:25)

More splashing around with our wet friends. Whales, penguins, (who spend more time in the water than on land), and stay alert for sharks!

Adventures In Asia (21:25)

The world's largest continent has the world's most amazing variety of animals -- huge eagles who pluck poisonous snakes out of the sea for supper, orangutans whose behavior mirrors humans, and solitary pandas who prowl China's dwindling forests.

Asia's Living Legends (21:25)

More of Asia's wild wildlife. Elephants, tigers, and wild dogs in India, oryxes and ibexes toughing it out in the Arabian Desert, and a dip in the Red Sea to see some eels and manta rays.

Polar Prowl (21:27)

The tough, rugged animals of the Arctic have found ingenious ways to survive. Some migrate south when it gets cold, like the caribou and many species of bird. Some hibernate, like mother polar bears. And some just put on lots of fat and fur, like the wacky walruses and monstrous musk oxen.

Cold, Cold South (21:31)

At the opposite end of the planet, another group of animals survives: penguins, seals, whales, migratory birds, and of course krill, the super-abundant tiny shrimp that are Antarctica's answer to breakfast cereal.

The Case of the Curious Canines (23:29)

You thought you knew man's best friend -- but you were wrong. For every domestic pooch, there is a rowdy relative. From hyenas to the wild dogs of Africa, dogs rule more than your back yard.

Cool Cats (23:29)

There's a tiger in your tabby! Meet the big cats, and learn that the domestic house cat has some amazing wild cousins that rule much of the world's wildernesses.

Creature Features (23:36)

Come face-to-face with some of the creepiest, weirdest, and most dangerous little things in the world. Dung beetles, vampire bats, and the deadly black widow are all a lot closer than most people think.

Dinosaurs Alive (23:36)

Millions of years ago dinosaurs ruled the Earth. Meet these prehistoric beasts, and see how they lived day-by-day in a constant struggle for survival.

Hanging With the Primates (23:37)

You're a lot more like your monkey relatives than you think. Meet the primates of the world, from the baboons to the wild proboscis monkeys, as they tie the link between humans and their hairier relatives.

Far-Out Families (23:36)

Families around the world look to one another for survival. From elephants to octopuses, ostriches to bullfrogs, families behave in many incredible ways.

Secret Weapons (23:37)

They've all got secrets. Some animals use their secrets to protect themselves, like the bombardier beetle -- others use their weapons to hunt, like the cobra.

Island Magic (23:37)

Visit some of the world's most fantastic landscapes -- islands. Animals around the world have adapted to their island environments, like the leaping lemurs of Madagascar and the Tasmanian Devils of Tasmania.

III. Series Descriptor for FCC 398

This series of videos, *Really Wild Animals* presenting animals, birds, and insects in their natural environments is designed to engage the curiosity and developing intelligence of boys and girls ages seven to ten. There is a special emphasis on nature, science, the adaptation, and survival of species, and their role in human planetary welfare. Each episode examines topics of Geography, Ecology, and the ways in which non-humans, animals, birds and insects adjust to the complexities of their specific habitats in the various continents and oceans that make up our planet, Earth. Using original footage, music, humor, and hosted by Dudley Moore, this series presents information about where animals live, how they build their unique dwellings, the tools they use for foraging, the migrations of animals due to climatic changes, and how animals procreate, care for, and protect their offspring. The main purpose of the series is to educate and inform young children about a variety of species, and how animals and humans are interdependent.

Jerome L. Singer, Ph.D.

Jerome L. Singer received his doctorate in 1950 in Clinical Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania. He is Professor-Emeritus of Psychology at Yale University, where he served for many years as Director of the Graduate Program in Clinical Psychology and also as Director of Graduate Studies in Psychology. Dr. Singer is Co-Director, with Dr. Dorothy G. Singer, of the Yale University Family Television Research and Consultation Center. He is a specialist in research on the psychology of imagination and daydreaming. Dr. Singer has authored more than 250 technical articles on thought processes, imagery, personality, and psychotherapy as well as on children's play and the effects of television. He is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the New York Academy of Sciences. He has been President of the Eastern Psychological Association; President of the Division of Personality and Social Psychology of the American Psychological Association; Chair of the Board of Scientific Affairs of the American Psychological Association; and President of the Division of Psychology of the Arts of APA. Prof. Singer has served as principal investigator for many federal and private foundation grants. For ten years he was Senior Consultant to the Open Laboratory on Conscious and Unconscious Mental Processes supported by the MacArthur Foundation at the University of California's Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute in San Francisco. Currently he is Co-Editor of the journal, *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*. He is on the Board of Directors of Playing for Keeps, Inc. a non-profit organization to promote constructive play. His most recent award in 2004 is *The Scroll of Honor* from the Yale Science and Engineering Society.

Dr. Singer has written or co-edited more than 15 books, including *The Inner World of Daydreaming*; *The Power of Human Imagination*; *The Stream of Consciousness*; *Television, Imagination and Aggression*; *A Study of Preschoolers*; *Repression and Dissociation*; *The House of Make-believe: Children's Play and the Developing Imagination*; *The Human Personality*; *The Parents' Guide: Use TV to Your Child's Advantage*; *Imagery Methods in Psychotherapy and Behavior Modification*; *Mind, Brain and Complex Adaptive Systems*, *Handbook of Children and the Media*, *Make-Believe: Games and Exercises for Children's Imagination*, *Imagination and Play in the Electronic Age*, and *Personality and Psychotherapy*.

Dorothy G. Singer is Senior Research Scientist, Department of Psychology, Yale University. She is also Co-Director of the Yale University Family Television Research and Consultation Center, and Fellow, Morse College. In addition she is Senior Research Associate, Yale Child Study Center. Formerly, Dr. Singer was the William Benton Professor of Psychology, University of Bridgeport. She is a Fellow of The American Psychology Association (APA) and on the Board of Directors of Division 46, the Media Division of APA. Research interests include early childhood development, television effects on youth, and parent training.

Dr. Singer has been principal investigator of numerous research projects funded by the National Science Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, Johnson & Johnson Baby Products, William T. Grant Foundation, The Mellon Foundation, Smith Richardson Foundation, The John D. and Catherine MacArthur Foundation, The National Institute of Early Childhood Education and others. She has authored over 150 publications, and written twenty books, some of which have been translated into Dutch, Italian, Turkish, Japanese and Thai.

Currently, Dr. Singer is involved in a Parent Training Project to teach parents to play with their preschoolers as a means of enhancing cognitive and social skills. In addition, she consults with parent groups, television industry executives, and government agencies concerning television and education. She is on numerous boards, and consults with Fisher-Price, Inc., PlayMobil, Hasbro, and Learning Curve International Inc. among others. As a developmental psychologist, she is involved in writing and developing teacher training materials for day care centers and for parents. Another facet of her work deals with media literacy and educating children to be critical users of television. She has co-authored curricula for grades K to High School concerning the media. She was on the Advisory Board of CBS to help select children's programs for television. She has consulted with National Geographic, LEGO, Stepping Stones Museum in Norwalk, CT, the Peabody Museum, Children's Museum of Manhattan, and the Lemelson Center at the Smithsonian. Dr. Singer was given the Distinguished Contribution to the Science of Psychology Award by the Connecticut Psychology Association in 1997 and the award for Distinguished Scientific Contributions to the Media by Division 46 of the American Psychological Association in 2004. She is the recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award from Teachers College, Columbia University for 2006.

Selected book titles are: *The House of Make-Believe: Children's Play and the Developing Imagination*; *Creating Critical Viewers*; *A Piaget Primer: How a Child Thinks*; *Playing for their Lives: Helping Troubled Children Through Play Therapy*; *The Parents' Guide: Use TV to Your Child's Advantage*, and with Edward Zigler and Sandra Bishop-Josef she has edited *Children's Play: Roots of Reading*, a Choice award book. Her newest books are: *Handbook of Children and the Media*; *Make-Believe: Games and Activities to Foster Imaginative Play in Children*; *Imagination and Play in the Electronic Age*; *Children, Culture and Violence*; and *Play=Learning*.