

The Editor's Page

1972 — a presidential election year . . . building up for the primaries in the spring, gaining momentum for the conventions in the summer, and climaxing with the election in November where the final decision is made! It's an interesting educational process to watch—or hadn't you noticed? As an adult educator, I'm always fascinated by the techniques and methods used by the campaigners to get their message to the public. Some messages come through loud and clear and to the point. Others don't. Listening to some, you begin to wonder what they're trying to say. Sometimes it's because they aren't really clear in their own minds what it is they're trying to say other than "Vote for Joe Blow!" They don't really have anything specific worth selling about Joe Blow. Other times, they've missed the point with the audience they are, in fact, reaching. The truth is, they don't really have a target audience in mind and end up losing those they thought they had!

I see an analogy between this situation and that of an adult educator or extension professional reaching his clientele. As Riessman says, the educator has to "contact" the potential learner first and then "connect" or relate something about the knowledge he wants to teach to the learner's interest and his way of learning. It's at these two points that many political campaigners and adult educators fail, missing the boat and losing their audience.

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