COLLEGE TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD CLOSED-CIRCUIT TV INSTRUCTION

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This study reports the results of a questionnaire survey made of attitudes toward closed-circuit television by faculties of four New England colleges and universities. Royal D. Colle is chairman of radio-television at Ithaca College; Robert S. Albert is at Emory University.

Although material shortages are causing concern in the school and college situation these days, the dearth of effective instructor-power is perhaps the most important educational threat at present. The effectiveness of closed-circuit television in extending the power of individual instructors has been measured and the results have been encouraging. Evidence from studies suggest that students receiving television instruction do not learn significantly less than those receiving conventional instruction—and in some cases they attain higher achievement scores.

An important corollary to the study of effectiveness is that of attitude. Although this aspect has been investigated in respect to participants in closed-circuit television teaching systems, there has been little done in uncovering the predispositions of nonparticipant faculties—those who might be called upon eventually to participate.

Using previously tested hypotheses in the social sciences and incidental comments from college and university faculties as a starting point, we decided to investigate the attitudes of the nonparticipants in relation to five variables:

1. The amount of information they have concerning the use of the medium in this context. (The more information the instructor has, the more he will be likely to accept closed-circuit instructional television.)

2. The number of years of teaching experience they have had. (The less experienced instructors are more likely to accept this innovation.)
3. Opinions regarding commercial television. (If they are strongly critical of commercial television, there is less likelihood of their accepting closed-circuit systems.)

4. Academic load. (There will be more approval of closed-circuit television by those instructors having the larger academic loads.)

5. The nature of the subject being taught by the nonparticipants. (Those instructors teaching courses with potentially more visual material, e.g., physical sciences and other courses with laboratory exercises, will be more apt to accept the use of television as an aid in the classroom.)

The Study

In the study we used faculties from four New England colleges and universities, including “Ivy” type and not-so-“Ivy” type institutions. Instructors in the social sciences, humanities, and physical sciences were sent questionnaires asking them to select from a list of statements those opinions which they agreed with most closely; what their source, if any, was for information concerning this use of the medium; what they thought were the results of tests; whether they approved, disapproved, or were undecided about using television in their own courses; and how they thought it could be used effectively. In addition, general information was requested, such as how long they had taught and their class load.

One hundred sixty-two replies were received representing 53 percent of those included in the original sample. As a result of the answers, each respondent was placed in one of five categories reflecting his general disposition toward television: strongly approve, approve, undecided, disapprove, or strongly disapprove.

Over-all, the data suggested that more instructors had a negative attitude toward classroom use of television than had a positive attitude. Approximately 50 percent indicated some degree of disapproval while 45 percent were undecided and 5 percent approved. Despite the heavy concentration of responses in the undecided and negative categories it is significant that only 20 percent of the respondents answered that television had no application in teaching. (See Table 1.)

Information Level

Over 60 percent of the instructors were unfamiliar with any classroom television according to the responses. However, the greatest proportional incidence of unfamiliarity occurred in the “strongly disapprove” group and diminished with each move to-