

A Report to Trainers on . . .

Industrial Education Via Television*

A report compiled to answer Training Directors' questions about use of TV for Training

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The Milwaukee Vocational and Adult School intends to use television courses as a device for upgrading employees for more responsible positions. To answer Training Directors' questions, I'd like to enlarge the base from Milwaukee, Vocation and Adult Schools, WMVS-TV, Channel 10, Milwaukee, Wisconsin Educational Television, to include WTTW-TV, Channel 11, Chicago Educational Television Station. Chicago was on the air first and has a bit more experience.

Question 1. How are the courses operated?

I would like to quote from the bulletin for "Milwaukee Vocational School's Telecourse: Beginning Slide Rule," to illustrate *one type* of course.

Telecourses are an extension of the educational services offered by Milwaukee Vocation School. These courses will be taken directly into the home.

Those who register for this course will be provided with a Study Guide and Workbook. An end-of-course examination will be given to those who wish to qualify for a Course Completion Certificate. The registration fee is \$2.00, plus the course fee of \$1.50, which covers the Study Guide and Workbook.

The slide rule, which may be ordered from the school, is additional.

The primary purpose of this course is to teach the use of the slide rule in performing basic calculations. The course is divided into two portions. Part One considers the detailed operations of multiplication, division, and combined multiplication and division. Part Two considers squaring, cubing, square root, cube root, reciprocals, sines, cosines, tangents, logarithms, and combinations of these.

I would like to quote from "Economics Round Table," a brochure, to illustrate another typical program out of Chicago.

*Mr. Surles presented this report to the Wisconsin Training Directors Association (Chapter of ASTD) and to the Industrial Relations Association of Wisconsin.

Four o'clock in the afternoon. Wednesday, September 1958. Conference Room of your Company.

You are among fifteen men and women in a round-table discussion group. Your group is one of 100 groups in 100 plant and company conference rooms throughout the city.

You are watching TV.

The TV speaker is letting you know the importance of the study you are starting on. He is reminding you that what you figure out for yourself you never forget. You will make it a part of your life. You will put it to work in your daily job.

"Let no man imagine he has no influence," the TV speaker has just quoted. "Whoever thinks becomes a light and a power."

In twenty minutes the TV speaker has finished.

You and your round-table group, under your conference leader, pick up at the point where the TV speaker has left off.

In the week before each session, your conference leader joins with conference leaders of other groups in a coaching seminar.

Their coach is the same James MacRae you meet on television at each of your round-table study sessions.

What Does The Program Do? It does two things: builds leadership, and furthers inquiry into fundamental economic principles.

How Are These Programs Financed? By the participating companies, etc., or the organization or institution most interested. The station does not pay talent fees.

Question 2. Is it feasible to integrate these courses into an in-plant training program?

I would like to quote from "Operation Job Training, Status Report," January 1, 1958, by Chalmers Marquis, Director of Program Development, WTTW-TV Chicago. In connection with The Economics Round Table Course, he states:

The TV presentation was intended to coordinate the widely separated groups, and to provide them with a stimulating introduction to the day's discussion. Thus far the series appears to be achieving these goals even more satisfactorily than anticipated.

It would appear Training Directors of hundreds of Chicago companies integrated this course into their in-plant training programs in a feasible way.

Question 3. Who is eligible to register for the course?

On the bulletin announcing the Milwaukee Slide Rule course, there were no restrictions mentioned. In the Chicago Economics Round Table course, the plant Training Director or equivalent picked the groups.

Question 4. Who determines the subject content of the course?

Of the courses just mentioned, the Beginning Slide Rule idea was chosen by personnel of the Vocational School and station WMVS-TV. However, the fact that the station has solicited surveys of the felt-need type from WTDA and IRDA

and other outlets, and wishes to be guided by these surveys, indicates who will determine the subject content of the courses. The Chicago project was the result of a survey in the industrial training area.

Question 5. What is the subject content of future courses likely to be?

Again I'd like to quote from the Marquis report of the Chicago station, which the Milwaukee station respects.

To outline the "Operation Job Training" idea, and to seek advice on its best direction, information about the project was sent to almost 1000 major (over 100 employees) Chicago area firms. Together with a brief description of the project, these firms were asked to indicate those training needs they considered most important, and under what conditions they thought they might be offered on television. Local educational institutions were included in this mailing also in order that they would be aware of the project.

Response to the questionnaire to date total 73, or about 8% of the firms surveyed. Total number of course recommendations thus far is 471, 6% per return. About 1/3 of the firms suggest company time for such courses, 2/3 recommend employee time.

Leading the course preferences is Human Relations, listed by 45 of the 73 responses (63%). Other courses Business Letter Writing, Creative Thinking, Effective Speech, Supervisor Development, Fundamental Economics, and Conference Leadership. The remaining courses range downward from Improved Reading (23) to Better Health (4).

By far the greatest training needs indicated deal with person to person relations, communicating and basic understandings, rather than with specific manual or academic skills.

Although the returns indicate far from unanimous support of the project, it is of real significance that in the Chicago area alone, over 70 major firms indicate that they are currently interested in supporting specific training courses for their employees via WTTW-TV.

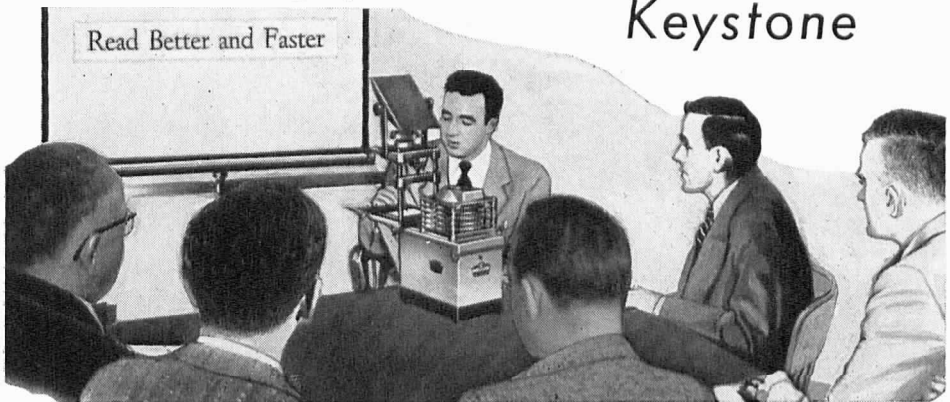
In response to the information learned from the Operation Job Training survey, a number of courses are in various stages of planning. Already being developed are: college-level courses in Supervisor Development, Industrial Relations, and Communications, and non-academic courses in Human Relations, Self-Development, and Business Letter Writing. Actually producing these courses are universities and professional institutions in the Chicago area, in cooperation with WTTW-TV.

Question 6. Who will conduct the courses?

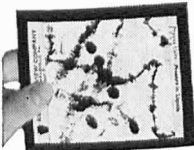
I'd like to sum up, in an interpolated way, the opinions of James Robinson, Director of the Chicago station and Mr. Otto Schlaak, Educational TV Coordinator of the Milwaukee Station.

The teacher must be experienced in working before the type of group the program calls for. He should know how the group is reacting even though the group isn't there—how they would respond to a question even though the question is rhetorical. If a small group is before him implementing role-play, etc., he should

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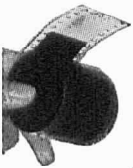
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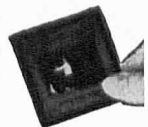


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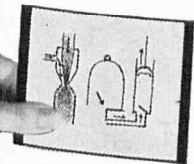


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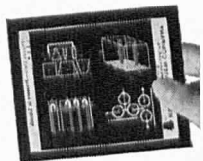
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know how the viewer is reacting. He should be aware of the best current thinking in his field, but his long suit should be adapting his material to the given group as an effective communicator. This description is not unlike that of a good training director. In Chicago, the Adult Educational Counsel passes on the instructor. This is not the case in Milwaukee where the station has jurisdiction.

Question 7. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the project?

Advantages:

More people can be reached.

Can present a greater variety of material.

Can reach plants without big training set-up.

Can use film nicely.

Can get better people to teach.

Some aspects of showmanship are better - can pin-point attention.

Every student has a front row seat.

Can play back on kinescope at another time during day or evening.

With video tape, can play back immediately.

Can duplicate tapes, erase, and edit.

Closed circuit, prohibitive in expense, is not necessary; open circuit can serve as closed circuit.

Plant people can take course for credit, graduate.

Costs can be covered by pool funds, such as five companies of the electrical industry, or funds can be covered by one large company wishing to experiment.

Company names must be mentioned (but no advertising).

Disadvantages:

TV can augment, but never substitute for, the classroom with its teacher-student relationship, its discipline, etc.

Specialized company needs are difficult to handle.

Schedules could conflict.

It's hard for representatives of associations like WTDA and NMA to push these projects and lend their know-how, because such representatives of necessity are preoccupied with their own work. It appears that this is the reason that NMA and Illinois TDA have not backed it intensively.

Recommendations

After turning over this material and talking to key men in the field, I cannot escape conviction that a chapter committee be established to assist WMVS with program planning. After a sufficient experimental period, we could make this committee permanent under WTDA's constitution, its purposes definitely stated, and its chairman reporting to the membership.