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ABSTRACT

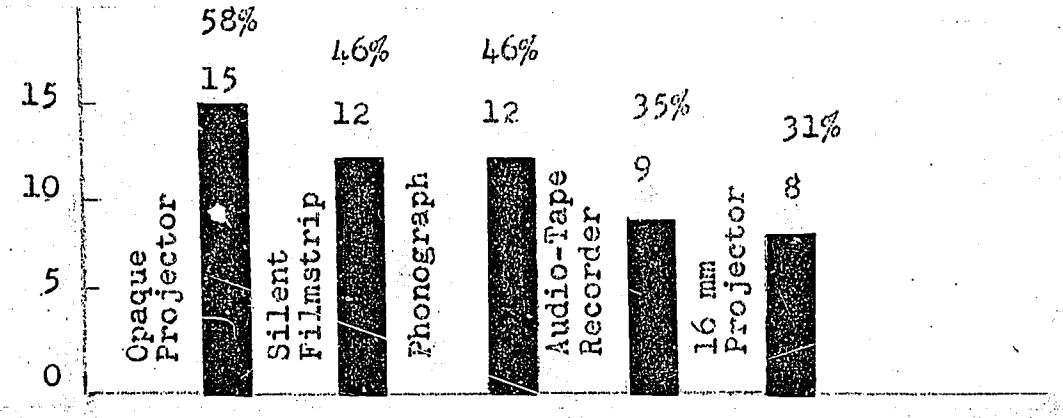
This 9-item questionnaire surveyed past, present, and projected media use in the Illinois junior colleges. Data were provided by the audio-visual or learning resources director of each responding institution. Some of the more important findings follow. In the past, opaque projectors (58 per cent), silent filmstrip projectors (46 per cent), phonographs (46 per cent), audiotape recorders (35 per cent), and 16mm projectors (31 per cent) were the five items used by most responding institutions. Similarly, charts and maps (73 per cent), phonographs (65 per cent), 16mm projectors (65 per cent), overhead projectors (62 per cent), and silent filmstrip projectors (62 per cent) are most widely used at present. The greatest future emphasis will be on closed-circuit television (85 per cent), dial-access television (65 per cent), audio-tutorial methods (61 per cent), computer-based teaching terminals (58 per cent), and educational television broadcasts (50 per cent). Half the respondents indicate that adequate facilities (comfort, decor, equipment, functionality, and space) are not presently available for multi-media presentation in classrooms, though a like number feel that the media themselves are available. None of the quipment mentioned among the top five in past or present use is mentioned in future needs. Finally, closed-circuit television appears to have the most promising applications in the near future. [Because of marginal reproducibility of original, this document is not available in hard copy.] (JO)

EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA IN THE ILLINOIS JUNIOR COLLEGES

By Ralph Butler and John Starkey

The media usage in the Junior Colleges of Illinois was surveyed by a questionnaire. There have been several studies on effectiveness, costs, and acceptance of instruction by television, such as those by Carpenter (1958). Other studies such as those by Vandermeer (1964) touched on media systems, and Twyford (1965) referred to the concept of communications equipment as educational communications media. But the thrust of this small research is the trends in the Junior Colleges of Illinois in hopes that this may illuminate the media usage of the past and present, as well as set a pattern for the future considerations.

The nine-question questionnaire with a cover letter attached was mailed directly to all the present Junior (community) Colleges in the state of Illinois. The letter and envelope were addressed to the audio-visual or learning resources director of all the Junior Colleges. Included with the letter and questionnaire, a return envelope was sent to encourage high rate of return.



The first question consisted of checking various items of audio-visual equipment relevant to their use as past, present and future uses as well as all-around most useful. Figure 1 shows, the top five audio-visual aids that had strong past usage.

The opaque projector leads with 58% or 15 responses. Next is the silent filmstrip projector with 46% or 12 responses. Parallel with the filstrip projector is the phonograph. The fourth item is the audio-tape recorder with 35% or 9 responses and last of the leading five is the 16mm motion picture projector.

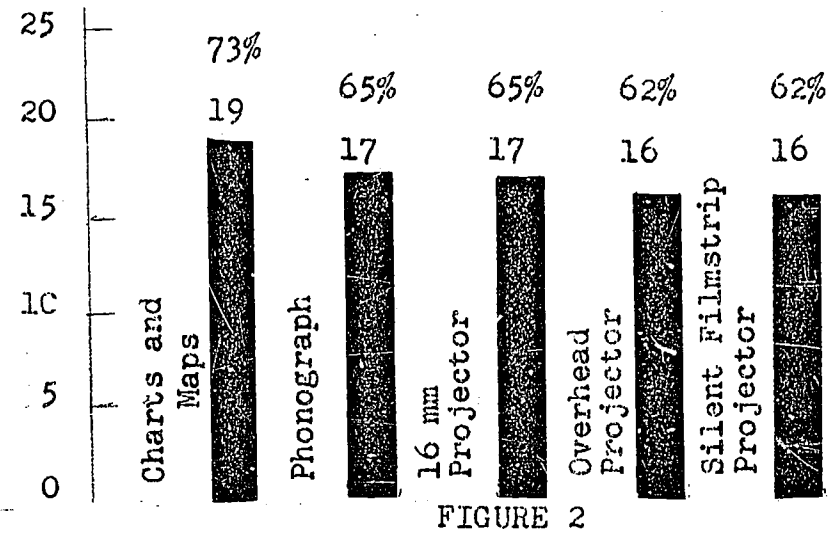


FIGURE 2

PRESENT USAGE
OF MEDIA EQUIPMENT
(FIRST FIVE)

Figure 2 shows the present use of media equipment with charts and maps leading with 73% or 19 responses. The phonograph and 16mm projector are tied for second with 65% or 17 responses. The overhead projector and silent filmstrip projector are equal with 62% or 16 responses.

Figure 3 shows future emphasis on media equipment. Leading is Closed-circuit T.V. with 85% or 22 responses. Second is Dial-Access television with

65% or 17 responses. Audio-tutorial methods with 61% or 16 responses is next. Computer-based teaching terminals are fourth with 58% or 15 responses. Fifth with 50% or 13 responses are educational television broadcasts.

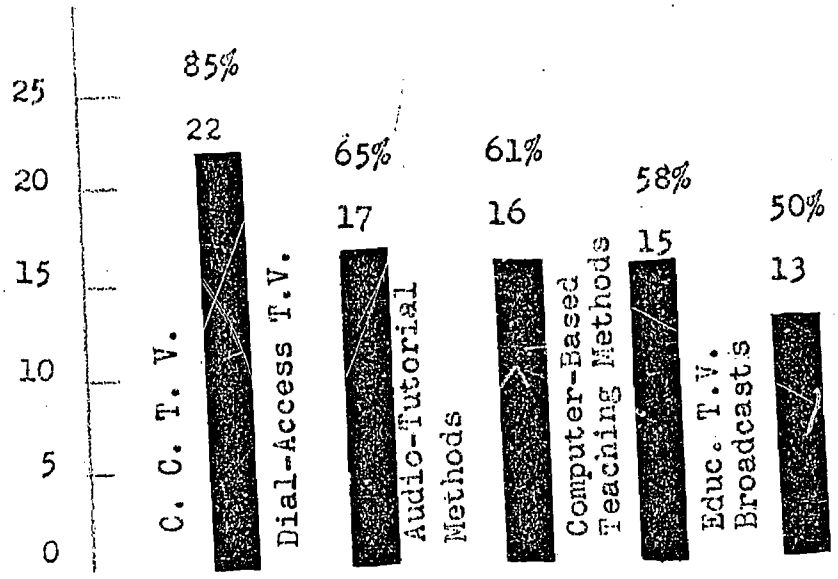


FIGURE 3

FUTURE EMPHASIS
ON MEDIA EQUIPMENT
(FIRST FIVE)

Figure 4 shows the results of the all-around most useful media items. The overhead projecter leads with 58% or 15 responses. Second is the audio-tape recorder with 50% or 13 responses. The 16mm projector received 42% or 11 responses. Audio-tutorial methods received 27% or 7 responses while closed-circuit television was fifth with 19% or 5 responses.

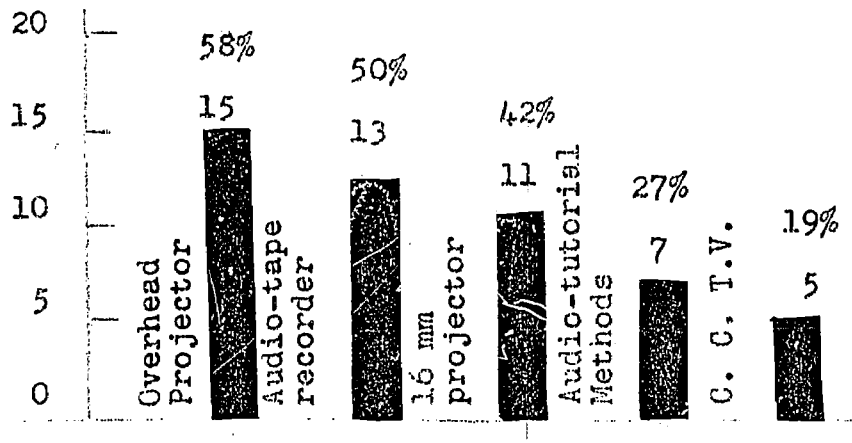


FIGURE 4

ALL-AROUND MOST USEFUL
MEDIA EQUIPMENT (FIRST FIVE)

The closed-circuit television was the most wanted equipment, with computer-based terminals and dial-access television. Also mentioned were audio-tutorial methods and 8mm motion picture projectors. Half of the replies were in the negative when queried about adequate facilities for audio-visual presentation in the classrooms (including decor, equipment, space, functionality and comfort.) Most instructors were rated as using the services of the audio-visual department frequently but one-third replied sometimes and two never. The 16mm motion picture projector was most frequently used, followed by the overhead projector, the tape recorder and the slide projector. Transparencies were rated slightly lower in usage than the tape recorder and the slide projector. Only one-third thought there was emphasis on student's use of individual instructional methods but all were predicting an increase in usage of educational media to enhance basic concepts of learning on an individual basis.

Approximately one half of the colleges stated that audio-visual equipment is presently available, and most thought more equipment would be available in the future.

The analysis of this questionnaire reveals that past utilization (refer to question one) has been strongly the opaque projector. This device has many features that deem it a versatile piece of equipment, but the disadvantages are great. Included in the disadvantages are weight, clumsiness, heat and general unreliability. The opaque projector can, however, show three dimensional objects easily. The survey has shown a strong trend towards charts and maps in present resources. With a good illustration, the need for the opaque projector would be nil. Closed-circuit television has ranked the highest of any resource in any category (twenty-two responses or 85%) and seems to have any degree of flexibility for portrayal of objects from any angle to help the viewer see three dimensions. The closed-circuit television system is limited only by the imagination and the Carnegie Commission Educational Television (1967) has described the role of television on a nationwide basis.

Television can be used for local productions by students, faculty and administrative personnel, then retain the video-tape for library or catalogue filming. If at any time additions or repooductions are desired, it would be a simple matter to update or reproduce another video-tape sequence. The initial monetary outlay for a video-tape system is relatively high, but considering the flexibility and potential of the system, one can understand the enthusiasm for the closed-circuit system.

In analysis of media equipment, we find that only the silent filmstrip projector and the phonograph were among the first five that transferred from one time period in the questionnaire to another.

The filmstrip projector showed a rating of second in past media usage and came in fifth in present usage. The phonograph showed third in past usage and was second in present usage. None of the equipment mentioned in either past or present areas (of the first five) were transferred to future usage of media. The area of future media consists of equipment that has come into the realm of usage recently and been introduced in some instances within the past few years. This trend illustrates a strong emphasis on new equipment that will give instant backup or support used in teaching a lesson or unit.

The eighth question in the questionnaire asked for any comments relevant to audio-visual materials and utilization of past, present and future equipment. Some of the following responses were received. "Dial-access, closed-circuit television and video-tape methods need to improve." "Production techniques and graphics need to be emphasized." "There is a serious shortage of audio-visual people and a serious lack of knowledge in the field." "Equipment needs to be checked out to students." "More use should be made of the slide-cassete (tape) equipment." "Instructors should be trained with the equipment for local production." "How about home learning centers where the college loans audio-cassettes, and the student has cabled telecommunications within the home?" "Closed-circuit television could be used with a computer to back up responses such as programmed learning."

Questions concerning the past, present and future educational communications media equipment and environmental conditions were explored. It was found that of the first five pieces of educational communications media equipment used in the past, the opaque projector was first. In future equipment, closed-circuit television came in first with the most number of responses of any area. The all-around most useful piece of equipment was the overhead projector. The closed-circuit television system was the most wanted piece of equipment.

There seemed to be a balance on the quality of classroom conditions with eleven responses to lack of adequate facilities and ten responses to the positive. Most directors thought their instructors either frequently or occasionally used the audio-visual facilities.

The services provided showed that the 16mm motion picture projector was the first with the overhead projector next and the tape recorder was third.

The training of instructors for future use of educational communications media equipment was strongly suggested as was the students' use of the equipment for individual methods of instruction. At present, there is a lack of equipment at the Junior College level but future predictions showed that the equipment probably would be available.

All in all, the future for educational communications media equipment and teaching with the support of this equipment looks promising. The overwhelming vote of confidence in closed-circuit television (85% or twenty-two responses out of twenty-six) emphasizes the belief of these directors that this media of communication is suited to many purposes and is within the the realm of most junior colleges in the state of Illinois. The equipment

used in the past and present has not been transferred to future use. The educational communication media directors of the Junior (community) Colleges in the state of Illinois show a strong trend toward the latest developing equipment in the future. Travers and others (1964) concluded that some doubt had been thrown on the utilization of audio-visual materials. Several other studies have given educational communications valuable criticisms, but the import of this study is actual utilization as well as a glimpse into the future according to audio-visual directors and personnel in the Junior Colleges of Illinois. The great increase in Junior Colleges as a terminal education as well as a gateway to the universities, should focus the educational communications media profession on the trends of the present and future in these institutions.

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