A SURVEY OF THE LIMITATIONS OF TYPES OF MEDIA TRADITIONALLY USED IN TEACHING MARKETING COMPARED WITH COMPUTER ASSISTED INSTRUCTION (CAI)

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Abstract

With the advent of new technologies available to business educators, it is reasonable to assume that many educators are reassessing the effectiveness of traditional media in their classrooms. This article attempts to structure a review of some of those media and to suggest that computer assisted instruction (CAI) may be a viable alternative.

While the authors have not conducted research aimed at determining the effectiveness of CAI simulations, they propose that CAI should be seriously considered because of its proximity to reality. A theoretical construct is used in which media are considered on a continuum from "chalkboards to real-life marketing problems."

Mager's (1988) definition of media selection as "delivery system selection" including not only "instructional things" but also people and "job things" is used because it implies the interrelationships that are characteristic of new instructional technologies such as CAI.

A review of current educational research indicates that it is inconclusive whether there is a significant gain from using CAI in the classroom. While Kulik (1986) found an advantage of fifteen percentage points over traditional classroom instruction, Clark (1985), on the other hand, argues that the difference lies in the superior instructional design of computerized lessons and that high-quality traditional instruction can be just as effective.

The Media Continuum Model

Traditional instructional technologies are divided into non-projected and projected media and are contrasted with contemporary instructional technologies which are viewed as interactive. The technologies are seen on a continuum moving from a less realistic perspective to a more realistic one as it moves from left to right. The right side proximates real-life marketing experiences.

Media Limitations

It is realized that all media have pros and cons in their applications. In this discussion, the limitations of media use are considered in the context of how closely they help the student to bridge the gap between the classroom environment and the business world. Key questions are: (1) How closely do the media reflect real-life marketing issues? (2) Is the student able to control data during decision-making phases? (3) Do the media provide feedback and recommendations for corrective action? and (4) How adaptable are the media for individualized study?

Expected Benefits of CAI

If "experience is the best teacher," selection of media from the contemporary instruction technologies would best meet that educational goal. While the traditional media have their unique applications, the more recently developed ones may more closely resemble reality (Davies, 1980), (Harms, Stehr, Harris, 1972), and (Romiszowski, 1988).

In 1980, approximately 90 percent of all business schools were using CAI somewhere in their curriculum (Faria, 1980). Today, there is not a course in the business curriculum in which a computer cannot be used (O'Neal, 1989). Compared with previous generations, today's students have been exposed to new technologies throughout their lives and expect the use of computers in their curricula.

In a recent article in Dean and Director (August, 1989), a survey by the American Society for Training and Development indicated that, by 1992, more that 29 percent of Fortune 500 corporations will be using CAI in training professionals while 37 percent will be using it for skills and crafts training. The survey further showed that CAI is more cost effective that interactive video and teleconferencing.
In terms of instructional quality, human performance may yield broad fluctuations while technology driven processes are necessarily more consistent. It has been estimated that reading, hearing and seeing information results in fifty percent retention while adding the dimension of practice causes upwards of ninety percent retention (Dennee, 1988). To the extent that CAI enables practice the learning process should be enhanced.

References


"Use of High Tech Training Continues," Dean and Director, 14, (August 1989), 2.


