Chapter XIV

Using Tutored Video Instruction Methodology to Deliver Management Education at a Distance in China

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarizes a report of a systematic study of distance education programs whose audience was middle- and upper-level managers employed full-time at two Chinese companies. These programs were evaluated in terms of their educational effectiveness; i.e., did these students, and the companies who paid for their education, receive good value for their investment of time and money?

Unfortunately, few studies have attempted to validate benefits or to substantiate the shortcomings of distance education and associated technologies, especially in the area of international management education. The conclusions of two of the earliest systematic studies of distance suggested that using television as a means of delivering instruction to students, regardless of grade levels or subject matter, *could* result in student performance that was equal to that of "live" classes, (Chu & Schramm, 1967; Schramm, 1967).

In the early 1970s, the engineering school of Stanford University was approached by Hewlett-Packard (HP) to assist them in expanding the educational and training opportunities for employees working in company facilities at some distance from Stanford's campus (and HP's corporate headquarters). Based on the early results of Chu and Schramm, Stanford's engineering program pioneered the development of an experimental distance education methodology—Tutored Video Instruction (TVI)—for the purpose of providing graduate engineering education to Hewlett-Packard engineers located in Santa Rosa, California, approximately 100 miles from Stanford's campus. The engineering courses required for Master's degree completion were videotaped and were then sent to HP's plant in Santa Rosa, where the students met as a group to view and discuss the videotapes once per week. No in-person (i.e., "live") contact with the faculty was permitted, and Stanford University or HP did not support electronic messaging between the students and the faculty.

A local tutor was hired and trained to direct the students' learning at the Santa Rosa site. The tutor was charged with three functions: (1) to distribute materials for the instructor and to collect assignments; (2) to answer questions if possible; otherwise, to obtain answers from the instructor; and (3) to encourage discussion. Initially, the tutor was a retired HP engineer.

An evaluation of these initial TVI courses included these observations (Gibbons et al., 1977):

- TVI student grades were statistically higher than those of the on-campus students (whose "live" class had been taped for subsequent viewing off-campus).
- Smaller student groups liked TVI more than larger classes.
- The lower the distance student's undergraduate grade point average (GPA), the more effective was the TVI experience, as measured by each student's grade in the TVI classes.
- Tutors who answered questions directly (i.e., technically proficient) were less effective than those tutors who drew students into discussion (i.e., discussion facilitation).

There have been several studies of the effectiveness of TVI since Stanford's introductory program. For example, Stone (1990) conducted a cross-sectional analysis of TVI distance education offerings in engineering education. The results of this study directly support those of the pioneering Stanford study. Arentz (1995) conducted a study to compare the effectiveness of various distance education methodologies employed in teaching engineering to students in Norway. In direct comparison to other means of learning at a distance, TVI was clearly the preferred method of learning.

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