

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 071 454

EM 010 730

AUTHOR Breen, Myles P.; Ary, Donald E.
TITLE A Nationwide Survey to Determine Who Chooses
Instructional Films.
PUB DATE Nov 72
NOTE 11p.
JOURNAL CIT Audiovisual Instruction; v17 n9 p. 48-48
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Audiovisual Instruction; Budgeting; *Elementary
Schools; Films; *Instructional Films; *Media
Selection; National Surveys; School District
Spending; *Secondary Schools

ABSTRACT

The selection and purchase of instructional films for use in elementary and secondary schools is a complex process. Generally choosing a film is the task of the classroom teacher or the principal. However the decision can involve a wide variety of other personnel including audiovisual coordinators, business managers, and librarians. This survey of 114 randomly selected school districts reveals that the individual teacher appears to be the most important element in film selection, with the school principal next in importance. In addition, the survey also shows that the media budget for these districts amounted to only one percent of the total operational budget. This, the authors note, is a significant departure from the estimate of four percent made by the Commission on Instructional Technology. Finally, the survey shows that only a minority of schools have a stated policy for evaluating and selecting films. (MC)

ED 071454

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRO-
DUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM
THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIG-
INATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPIN-
IONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY
REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDU-
CATION POSITION OR POLICY

A Nationwide Survey to Determine Who Chooses Instructional Films

Myles P. Breen
Associate Professor, Department of Speech

Donald E. Ary
Associate Professor, Department of Educational
Administration and Services

Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois 60115

Introduction

Peter Drucker in The Age of Discontinuity claims that "Teaching today requires far too many people," and "The productivity of education is too low even for the richest country."¹ It is commonplace today that education is labor intensive with estimates as high as eighty-five cents of every dollar spent going to teacher salaries.² The Commission on Instructional Technology noted that no more than four percent of the per pupil expenditures in public schools in any year is spent for instructional materials.³ Leslie Gottardi, with a survey of 126 selected public school

EM 010 730

districts in Pennsylvania, found that there was a large discrepancy between the recommended expenditure for audiovisual instructional materials and the actual expenditure.⁴ Thus the question of resource allocation in the educational sphere is one of pressing concern.

The next question which is related to this is who in the educational establishment decides how the dollars allocated to instructional media and materials are to be spent. Standard textbooks⁵ and polemical pamphlets⁶ are available for theory and opinion, but empirical data are hard to find. This study addresses itself to a specific aspect of this larger question. Namely, it poses the questions: Who selects instructional films for the schools to rent or purchase? What criteria are employed to determine which films should be acquired? How are media budgets allocated? Although there has been considerable theorizing about these subjects, a search through ERIC and SRIS documents and articles listed in CIJE failed to locate empirical data on these questions.

Method

In order to investigate these questions, questionnaires were sent to the superintendents of 174 school districts randomly selected from the approximately 14,000 school districts listed in the 1970 Education Almanac.⁷ The superintendents were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. Who decides which instructional films are to be bought?
Check all that apply:
 - a. Business manager
 - b. Librarian
 - c. Teacher committee
 - d. Individual teacher
 - e. Building principal
 - f. Audiovisual coordinator
 - g. Other, please specify

2. Approximately, what is your total budget (in dollars)?
3. Approximately, how many dollars are allocated to instructional media?
4. Approximately, how were the instructional media dollars divided?
 - a. Purchase of equipment
 - b. Purchase of films
 - c. Rental of films
5. Do you have a stated policy for the evaluation and selection of films?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

A total of 114 questionnaires were returned. No systematic differences were observed between respondents and non-respondents in terms of geographic region, size of school, or grades included. Districts ranged in size from a minimum of 301 to a maximum of 40,663 pupils with a mean of 3,545. The majority of districts responding included grades 1-12 or K-12. (For a description of the sample, see Tables 1 to 4.)

Results (See Table 5)

The individual teacher appears to be the most important element in film selection. The individual teacher category was indicated by 54.5 percent of the respondents. The category "teacher committees" was indicated by 28.7 percent of respondents.

Respondents used the "other" category to indicate non-teaching personnel whose primary concern is instruction or curriculum such as department chairmen, 3.5 percent; director or coordinator of instruction, 2.7 percent; or subject area coordinator, instructional supervisor, or curriculum director, 0.9 percent each.

Administrators have an important voice in film selection; 46.5 percent of the respondents indicated that building principals are involved in film selection, 6.1 percent indicated that the school

business manager is involved.

Respondents wrote in the "other" category district superintendent, 4.4 percent; assistant superintendent, 3.5 percent; or county staff, 0.9 percent. School administrators are involved in the decision-making over half the districts.

The role of the librarian is certainly not one of a passive keeper of the materials. 40.4 percent of the sample chose the librarian as a person who makes or shares in the decision.

The majority of responding districts do not have audiovisual coordinators. (Or else they have audiovisual coordinators who have no voice in the selection of films.) Only 32.5 percent checked this category. An additional 4.4 percent indicated county AV offices in the "other" category, 1.8 percent reported regional IMC Film Cooperative Library, and 1.8 percent reported Director of Educational Materials.

An inspection of Table 6 will show that the instructional media budget was about one percent of the total budget. Since the respondents were asked to confine their answer to the 1970-71 school year this could be a reflection of the economic climate, but it is significantly lower than the estimate from the Commission on Instructional Technology quoted above.

From Tables 7 and 8 one can see that although 78.1 percent checked the category of equipment purchase, fewer gave an estimated percentage or a dollar figure. Similarly, 48.2 percent of the sample checked the category "film purchase" indicating that their district did purchase films, and 73.3 percent checked "film rental" (see Table 8). Also, fewer gave estimated percentages (Table 7) and fewer still gave

actual dollar figures (Table 6). From these responses, however, we can see that more districts rent films than actually purchase them, although the dollars allocated (mean \$2,500 for purchase and \$2,160 for rental), and the percentages estimated (24% for purchase and 22.6% for rental) indicated that equal resources are allocated to both avenues of action.

In addition, respondents were asked if they had a stated policy for the evaluation and selection of films. Only 13.2 percent said they did have such a policy. 77.2 percent said they had no policy, and 9.6 percent did not respond (see Table 9).

Discussion

From the mean of 2.3 categories marked we conclude that film purchasing decisions typically involved two or three people. The most important of these is the classroom teacher. School administrators are typically involved, audiovisual coordinators typically are not. Librarians are involved in many cases. Only a minority of schools have a stated policy for evaluating and selecting films.

In conclusion, the picture that emerges from this survey is that the decisions involved in instructional materials selection and purchase neither conform to the textbook model where teacher committees conscientiously select appropriate materials, nor to the cynical statement that: "Salesmen sell films to librarians." The reality, as always, is infinitely more complex.

References

1. Peter F. Drucker, The Age of Discontinuity, (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 335.
2. Francis Lehaney, "The Shakeout in Education," The Exchange, XXX (May, 1969), p. 1.
3. Leslie Gottardi, "A Survey of Instructional Media Budgets," Audio-visual Instruction, XVI (December, 1971), p. 66.
4. Ibid., p. 67.
5. James W. Brown, Richard B. Lewis, and Fred F. Harclerod, AV Instruction: Media and Methods, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), p. 67.
6. Doris M. Timpano, Crisis in Educational Technology, (New York: Gilbert Press, 1970).
7. Alvin Rentzky and James Green (eds.), 1970 Standard Education Almanac, (Los Angeles: Academic Media, 1970), pp. 244-418.

TABLE 1

Geographical Spread of the Sample

| <u>Region</u> | <u>Frequency</u> | <u>Percentage (%)</u> |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Undetermined | 1 | 0.9 |
| Southeast | 11 | 9.6 |
| Northeast | 17 | 14.9 |
| New England | 8 | 7.0 |
| Midwest | 28 | 24.6 |
| Central | 24 | 21.1 |
| West | 5 | 4.4 |
| Far West | 10 | 8.8 |
| <u>Southwest</u> | <u>10</u> | <u>8.8</u> |
| Total | 114 | 100.0 |

TABLE 2

Size of District Budgetwise

| | <u>No. of Districts</u> | <u>Percentage (%)</u> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Unknown | 29 | 25.4 |
| Below \$1.5 million | 56 | 49.1 |
| Between \$1.5 and \$5 million | 17 | 14.9 |
| <u>Over \$5 million</u> | <u>12</u> | <u>10.5</u> |
| Total | 114 | 99.9 |

TABLE 3

Grade Levels of the Districts Reporting

| <u>Grade Level</u> | <u>Frequency</u> | <u>Percentage (%)</u> |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Undetermined | 18 | 15.8 |
| K through 12 | 44 | 38.6 |
| 1 through 12 | 39 | 34.2 |
| 9 through 12 | 4 | 3.5 |
| K through 8 | 6 | 5.3 |
| <u>1 through 8</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>2.6</u> |
| Total | 114 | 100.0 |

TABLE 4

Number of Pupils in the Districts*

| | |
|---------|--------|
| Maximum | 40,663 |
| Minimum | 301 |
| Mean | 3,545 |
| Median | 1,519 |

*No. of pupils could not be determined for 16 districts (14% of respondents).

TABLE 5

Decision Makers for Instructional Film Purchase*

(See Question 1)
(N = 114)

| | <u>Checked</u> | <u>Percent of Sample (%)</u> |
|---|----------------|------------------------------|
| Individual teacher | 62 | 54.4 |
| Building principal | 53 | 46.5 |
| Librarian | 46 | 40.4 |
| Audiovisual coordinator | 37 | 32.5 |
| Teacher committee | 27 | 23.7 |
| Business manager | 7 | 6.1 |
| Others (written in) | | |
| Do not buy films | 14 | 12.3 |
| Rental service | 7 | 6.1 |
| District superintendent County AV Office | each 5 | 4.4 |
| Department Chairman Assistant Superintendent | each 4 | 3.5 |
| Director of Instruction Regional IMC Film Cooperative Area Library | each 2 | 1.8 |
| Coordinator of Instruction Director of Media Center Director of Educational Materials Curriculum Director Instructional Supervisor Subject Area Coordinator County Department of Education County Staff | each 1 | .9 |

*There was an average of 2.3 checks per questionnaire.

TABLE 6

Budget Information

| <u>Budgets</u> | <u>Minimum (\$)</u> | <u>Maximum (\$)</u> | <u>Mean (\$)</u> |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Total budget ^a | 240,000 | 16,500,000 | 2,402,000 |
| Instructional Media ^b | 400 | 250,000 | 23,600 |
| Equipment purchase ^c | 200 | 75,000 | 8,800 |
| Film purchase ^d | 200 | 15,000 | 2,532 |
| Film rental ^e | 100 | 10,500 | 2,034 |

(N = 114)

- ^a74.6% (85 districts) reported.
- ^b92.1% (105 districts) reported.
- ^c51.8% (58 districts) reported.
- ^d32.5% (37 districts) reported.
- ^e48.2% (55 districts) reported.

TABLE 7

Estimated Percentages of Media Budget Allocation*

| <u>Budgets</u> | <u>Minimum (%)</u> | <u>Maximum (%)</u> | <u>Mean (%)</u> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Equipment purchase ^a | 10 | 100 | 61.15 |
| Film purchase ^b | 1 | 82 | 28.23 |
| Film rental ^c | 1 | 100 | 25.69 |

(N = 114)

*When a percentage was given by respondents it was considered less accurate than a dollar figure. These percentages were not converted back to dollars. Similarly, whenever dollar figures were given for all three categories they were converted to percentages for this tabulation. Hence, a longer number is given reporting percentages than dollar figures.

- ^a68.4% (78 districts) reported.
- ^b41.2% (47 districts) reported.
- ^c65.8% (75 districts) reported.

TABLE 8

Checked Either Purchase of Equipment or Films or Film Rental

| | <u>Percentage (%) checked</u> |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Equipment purchase | 78.1 |
| Film purchase | 48.2 |
| Film rental | 73.3 |

(N = 114)

TABLE 9

Do You Have a Stated Policy for Evaluation
and Selection of Films?

| | <u>Percentage (%)</u> |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 13.2 |
| No | 77.2 |
| No response | 9.6 |

(N = 114)