

College Re-examines Educational Television

Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of articles on the use of television as an educational tool both for the nation and for Nebraska specifically.

By Dave Griffin
Educational television — once widely accepted as a new advance in the teaching curriculum — is now being critically re-examined at the University of Nebraska Teachers College.

In a recent study on the merits of educational television, Paul Johns and John Upright, graduate assistants, presented arguments for and against the classroom aid at a seminar this spring.

The University's KUON-TV, Channel 12, is one of 62 educational channels operative in the United States.

"Actually, we reached no formal conclusion from the study," Johns said. "Our purpose was only to give some insight into the potential and drawbacks of educational television."

"As changes in population trends become more acute for

the secondary schools, television will offer many attractions for schools with limited resources," he said. "Thus, the decision to include television in the classroom centers around local needs and resources," he said.

School Systems Decide
The trend found in our research is that each school system should decide for itself, Johns explained.

In handling the research, Johns presented the pro arguments for educational television, while Upright handled reasons against the medium.

"Altogether, we found about ten persuasive arguments both for and against educational television," Johns pointed out. "Probably its largest advantage is that it brings superior techniques to the attention of supervisors and classroom teachers."

"Thus it is valuable in teacher preparation and in-service training," he cited.

Other reasons cited were that educational television brings about a rethinking of curriculum and course ob-

jectives and it brings richer educational experiences than ordinarily possible under conventional classroom format.

Museum Exhibits
Museum exhibits are brought to the classroom visually, according to the report. Famous experts are more available for talks.

Also, because of the careful planning necessary, the television courses are generally better organized and cover more ground in less time, Johns said.

In fact, 83 per cent of the teachers in Hagerstown, Maryland, favored teaching with a television aid. Hagerstown was one of the first cities to adopt educational television and now uses it for grades three through eight.

Open circuit television enables parents to watch the same educational program as their children, he pointed out. Fifty-three per cent of Hagerstown children reported discussing school with their parents more than before educational television.

Sixty per cent said they had studied more since the advent of educational TV in Hagerstown while 50 per cent noted that they had read more library books.

"There are substantial savings in teaching positions and classroom space. More time is available for individuals if the teaching staff is not reduced," Johns said.

Stimulates Note-Taking
The report noted that television stimulated note-taking ability as well as the art of speaking clearly and distinctly in large classes. Fifty per cent of the Hagerstown students reported that they participated in class more, a percentage confirmed by observers who tallied the actual classroom participation.

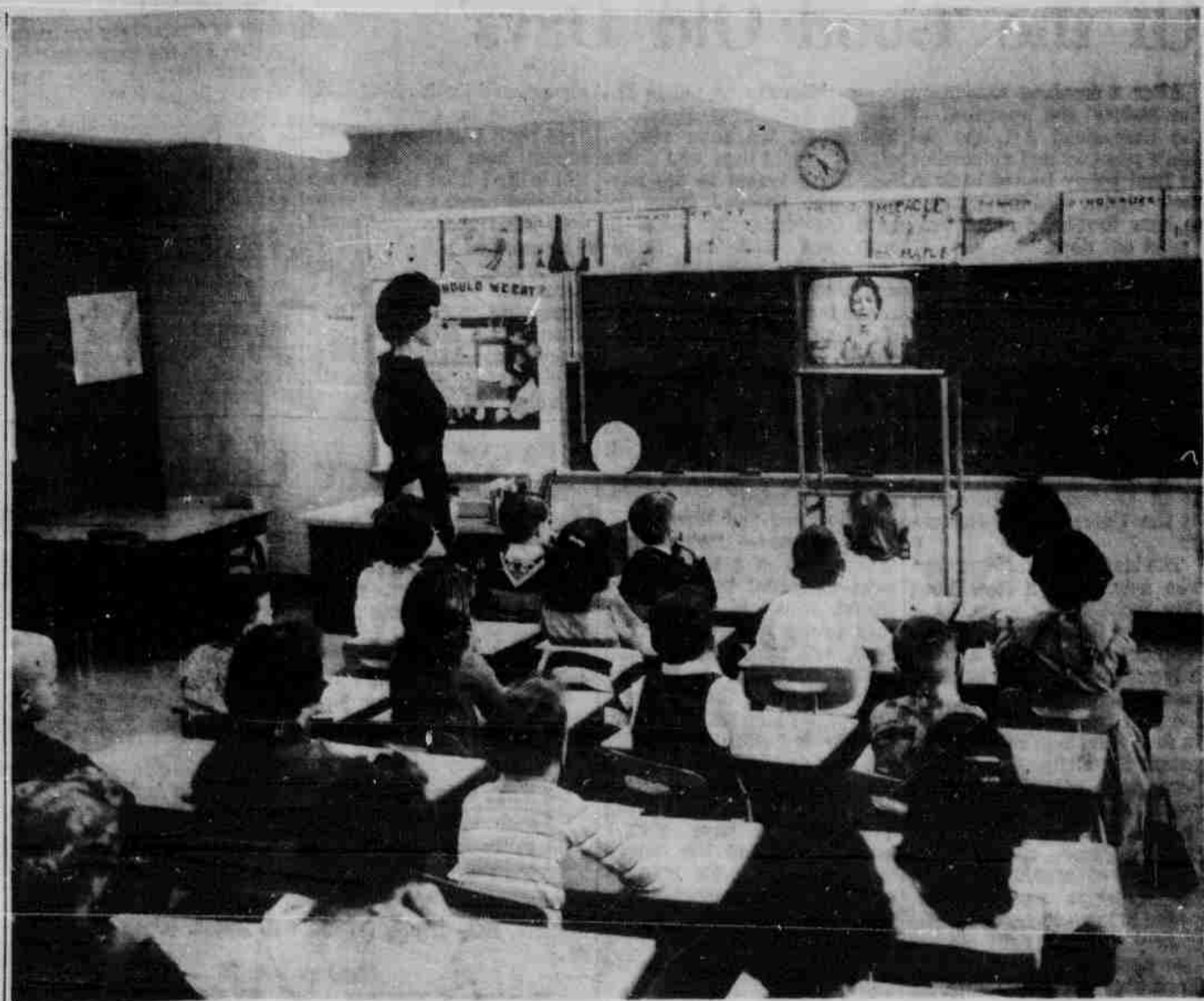
Tardiness and absences often tail off sharply among TV classes and discipline is not a problem except in a few isolated cases, Johns said.

Although many factors can be weighed in favor of television, the arguments against it are also quite formidable," Upright noted in his dissenting report.

"First, classroom facilities are inadequate. School cafeterias and auditoriums were not designed for television classes," he pointed out. "Alterations in existing structures are costly as well."

Obtaining Teachers Difficult
Finding, recruiting and training studio teachers is difficult, he said. It is also difficult for the classroom teacher to adjust, to be trained for the techniques of handling large classes and in soliciting students' participation. "Students themselves have difficulty in adjusting to large class situations."

Upright stressed the problem of integrating the telecast part of the lesson and the classroom follow-up into a unified, meaningful whole.



FRENCH CLASS—Lincoln elementary school children study French via KUON-TV at the University of Nebraska

"This involves the whole question of the roles of the studio and classroom teachers as members of a team, a question that has not been adequately explored," he said.

The report also noted that curriculum revamping, to take full advantage of television possibilities, is quite complex in adapting to the varying abilities of students greater than the normal classroom situation.

Scheduling, both with respect to the time of day the lesson is telecast and to the duration of the telecast and its place in the class period is most difficult also, Upright said.

Problem of Quality
"Finally, there is the never-ending problem of quality. Television is essentially neutral as a conveyor of ideas and concepts. The quality of the output can only be as good as the quality of the input, he added.

"A mediocre teacher on educational channel in Minnesota. Florida has five stations linked together at present with plans for an additional four.

The educational television program, first inaugurated in 1953, has expanded rapidly to colleges and universities and now even includes a station licensed by a municipal library.

In Texas, a closed circuit network connects 11 college campuses to enable the schools to share resources by using videotaped lectures and demonstrations.

Fifteen small colleges cooperatively offer telecourses over the Minneapolis-St. Paul

the merits of educational television, Nebraska was one of only two in which a majority of supervisors were against the medium, according to the report.

Out of 11 areas polled on

Foreign Ag Specialists Attend Land-use Symposium Here

Thirty-one agricultural specialists from 16 foreign countries are attending the Hornstead Centennial Symposium on land-use at the University of Nebraska this week.

Held at the Nebraska Center for Continuing Education, the four-day Symposium which opened yesterday will hear the nation's top scholars and governmental authorities on land-use policies.

The foreign specialists are

in two delegations; one, on "Economics of Agricultural Production and Resource Use", and the other, on "Agriculture and Land Development."

Sponsoring the groups are the Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Land-Grant Colleges.

The seven-member group on ag economics includes representatives from Columbia, Nicaragua, Spain, Surinam, Turkey and Vietnam. Dr. Ralph Cole of the University of Nebraska said the group will spend two and a half months in Nebraska studying the economics of agricultural production and the supply of food.

The second group, under the direction of Dr. Lloyd K. Fischer, will consist of 24 members from British Guiana, Cameroon, Ceylon, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Malagasy, Mali, Paraguay, Senegal and Surinam.

Remaining in Nebraska through June 23, the group will study relationships between agriculture and other segments of economics.

Woods Fellows Make History

Forty-four outstanding high school teachers of English in Nebraska are on the campus as Woods Curriculum Institute Fellows, according to Dr. Paul A. Olson of the University of Nebraska.

As pioneers of a new approach to teaching English, the Fellows are attending an eight-week Institute from June 11-Aug. 4. They will have all of their expenses paid through a \$27,000 grant from the Woods Charitable Fund.

The plan of the Institute involves the teachers taking three courses each morning, spending the afternoons in planning and the evenings in study or hearing lectures and seeing films related to the Nebraska Curriculum.

Critical Year At University

(Continued from Page One)

of Nebraska to maintain a strong University. I think, however, that it also reflects an underestimation of the job and the requirements which must be met to see it through."

The Chancellor said that increased support the University has received during the past three years has, up to now, placed the University in a better position to compete for staff than at any time and that the investment has paid dividends in attracting millions of dollars in outside support and in the growth of the University's graduate program.

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