

## **TELEVISION AS AN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY: USING TELEVISION AT OPEN EDUCATION FACULTY, ANADOLU UNIVERSITY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In distance education, it is a fact that the rate of learning has increased by the help of augmenting variety of technologies. Television, as an audio-visual medium, is one of the effective media in distance education by its characteristics like widespread coverage of audience, supplying equality of opportunity, transmitting the human resources to big audience mass. In distance education the lack of mutual interaction and face to face education are important. As well, another problem is to overcome the loneliness feeling of the students. It is possible to make use of television programs both to obtain face to face education, mutual interaction and to create the feeling of state of belonging.

Open Education Faculty (OEF) has benefit from educational television programs to prop up and to consolidate printed materials. Being parallel to tendency of individualism, OEF is producing live broadcasts which supplies face to face communication besides the programs providing the feeling of belonging over the students. This will be evaluated in the announcement.

**Keywords:** Distance Education, Open Education Faculty, Anadolu University, Television.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Anadolu University Open Education Faculty was established in 1982-1983 academic year. Since then, the printed materials have been used as the basic educational technology. Besides printed materials, radio and television technology have been used as the supportive technologies. Computer Technology Aided Learning has also added to the system since 1993.

#### **Why Television at the Open Education Faculty?**

Alkan points out the major assumptions for distance education as follow:

- Individuals are in need of different education. As the present situation cannot meet this need, it is necessary to provide mass education by individual and free learning by developing new opportunities.
- New options must make the insufficiency of traditional educational practices disappear.
- New models must give opportunities to outsiders of the present education system
- New opportunities must provide all individuals equality in education (Alkan, 1999, p.7).

For these various reasons use of television has been increasing from day to day by large audiences. It makes television inevitable in the practice of distance education field in Turkey as a developing country. From the point of the faculty, television broadcast can reach a large audience across the country through its national network. The faculty can also make use of newer, synchronous technologies or use interactive technologies such as teleconferencing, internet services, etc. Using of these technologies should take into account the target community. In other words, the best technology to provide all individuals equal opportunities is radio-television technology. This is the main reason that

television, a more advantageous technological tool than radio with its audio-visual facilities, is being used non-stop and is improving in each project of the Open Education Faculty.

### **Why Television?**

Television, which has an important place in mass communication, has a significant role in distance education with its special position, the way of presentation and qualities peculiar to itself.

Technological developments in the field of communication can be adapted in the field of education as it is adapted to many fields of life. Thanks to the new technologies available in this field and the advantages they provide, television can already be seen as an outdated tool. Yet as long as the opportunities it provides still keep its validity, television technology is not far from the new developments. Thanks to its special features, television in distance education fulfills the functions mentioned below:

- Supporting and enhancing teaching
- Instructing
- Explaining , clarifying
- Summarizing
- Reinforcement
- Motivation and encouragement
- Using as supplementary for the other materials
- Imposing study speed ( determining rate of study)
- Presenting a reference to large masses
- Changing behavior
- Presenting unreachable facts and events (Hizal, 1983, p. 57).

Of these special features, perhaps the most important one is that television is a very familiar and attractive source from the point of view of buyers. It is also part of our daily life.

As a result of developments in communication technologies, the price of radio and television sets are dropping and their being part of our daily life has made these tools necessary in the field of education (Kaymas, 1999, p.76).

Information transferred through of television is different from traditional education methods with respect to the audio-visual presentation. Explanations related to the subject and examples can be presented visually, so the learner gets motivated, his/her desire for learning increases, and therefore learning and remembering become easier.

Allowing thousands of people spreaded a large and distance geographic regions to receive the same program at the synchronous time, television broadcast helps overcome the problem of inequality and imbalance among the regions by providing equality in opportunities.

Television transfers the events or processes through a time process peculiar to itself. In fact a process that might require a long operation can be broadcasted with main points in a short period of time. Television may grant positive motivation such as attracting the learner's attention to a certain point or arousing attention with the movements of the camera's coming close, going away, and reflecting details.

Invisible or virtual objects, today, can be animated with different expression methods such as cartoon films. It enables distinguished instructors to reach a large mass of students at the same time. The most distinctive specialty of television is its ability to present information to the student which other tools cannot. This is an important opportunity for students who were unable to study at a university at in other educational institutions. (Bates, 1998, p.215). Education methods, such as lecture, demonstration,

and experimentation which are present in traditional education, are accepted in a different view in distance education. By using the screen as a laboratory, it is normally possible to demonstrate experiments which are too difficult to show to the students through all its phases (Gokce, 1997, p. 239).

Television is an effective tool in expressing abstract concepts or ideas. Abstract concepts are usually produced and conveyed with words. Besides this, in making an abstract concept concrete, the role of animation and visual experimentation is very important. The limitation here is how to combine the text, which is involving information, with moving views, animation, concrete ideas, utterance and objects like pictures. Television in the learning process could be helpful in understanding abstract ideas directly (Bates, 1998, 215-217). Television is especially useful for lessons like geography, because it enables us to see whatever possible to see (Turan, 1994, p. 160).

Though production is a complicated process, the cost per person is low. (see Potashnik-Capper, 1998 for the cost comparison of distance education tools) All these features point out the superiority of television in the presentation of information. Besides these advantages, television has some serious disadvantages too which are listed below:

- The experience of watching television has been competed against a lot of activities which a viewer can do whatever want to do at the same time.
- Each of the programs is compete against to the other programs which are broadcasted from other channels.
- The viewer can prefer shifting to other program(s) or to daily another activities instead of watching program if television program does not present any attracting or watchable subject for the viewer. (Mutlu 1995, pp. 21-22)

One of the important disadvantages of television is that it does not provide instant feedback. It's too hard to capture the viewers' reactions about the program. For this reason, the producer does not have a chance to control if the program is not watched by the viewer. In the meantime, broadcast television isn't interactive. So that participating of the viewers are getting low. Producer is never forgetting these important disadvantages when producing an educational television program.

#### **IN WHAT PROJECTS HAS TELEVISION BEEN USED?**

The projects which the Open Faculty Education used television as an educational technology are;

##### **Academic Year of 1999-2000 Bachelor of Arts Programs**

Faculty of Economics  
Faculty of Business Administration

##### **Academic Year of 1999-2000 Two-Year-Higher Education Programs**

Business Administration  
Local Public Administration  
Public Relations  
Accounting  
Foreign Trade  
Banking and Insurance  
Office Management  
Sales Management  
Tourism and Hotel Management  
Social Sciences  
Home Management  
Medical Institutions Management  
Theological Studies

Television programs prepared and produced for this project are given in Table: 1

Table 1:  
Academic Year of 1999-2000 Television Programs\*

	The Number of Programs (total)	Duration of Programs (hours)
<b>Bachelor of Arts Programs</b>		
Lecture Programs	755	514
Preparation for exams	60	30
Preparation for exams (live)	30	30
<b>Two-year Higher Education Departments</b>		
Lecture Programs	529	360
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1374</b>	<b>934</b>

\* Information from Anadolu University, Radio and TV Production Center

Besides these televised broadcasts, learners can buy videotapes of these programs if they apply to the faculty. Videotapes of lectures are sent to his/her address on demand. For such demands students pay a fixed price.

### **The Project of Western Europe**

This project, put into action by the Open Education Faculty in 1986, was designed for Turkish Citizens living in Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland and Austria. Thanks to the project carried out for the purpose of rendering higher education for Turkish Citizens living abroad, learners there have chance to study Business Administration and Economics for a license degree, and Foreign Trade and Tourism for a pre-license degree.

In this project, television programs about the courses are posted to the learners as a videotape together with other materials. Thus, students are given a chance to make use of these materials in their own convenience.

### **The Project of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus**

This project is carried out with the purpose of presenting higher education to the Turks living in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and covers all the license and pre-license programs of Open Education Faculty. Television programs are conveyed to the students via television broadcast. Anadolu University does not give academic counseling for the reason that distance between two the countries. Such services are given through only teleconferencing interactively. Teleconferencing was put into practice in the academic year of 1999-2000. A total of 8 hours of advisory is given twice a week, by getting together students in the Open Education Faculty's office in Nicosia. All students there are able to have an interactive communication. Thus an synchronous technology was first started at the Open Education Faculty in this project.

## **PRODUCTION OPPORTUNITIES**

The Radio and Television Broadcasting Center which has two well-equipped television and two sound studios containing out-door shooting equipment (OBV, 6 ENG cameras, light and sound sets, prompter etc.) established in 1982 at Anadolu University. It makes possible all sorts of television productions with its own digital edit units, graphic, decoration, animation, archive and planning, and videotape copying departments. The center has also computer, sound and maintenance, and repair laboratories. It employs highly distinguished and experienced producers graduated from a higher education institution or got an MA degree from one of these institutions. In the departments of the

center, in-service training is carried out periodically. In addition, produced programs have been revised during observation meetings in the center and the suggestions for improving the productions are put into practice.

## **PRODUCTION PROCESSES and MEDHODS of PRODUCTION OF TV PROGRAMS**

Producing and broadcasting television programs are highly expensive. It is an easy work for an subject expert to keep talking in front of the camera. Additionally, this way does not mean for using television ineffectively as being an educational medium always. At the beginning, every unit had its own television program. Yet, with the adoption of the view that an educational television program must use all the opportunities of television, the process of television production was, in that time, re-evaluated and different methods were accepted. In the present process, groups of experts, formed for each project, have been reviewing the existing television programs, and deciding on the renovation of the programs that have become invalid in content or in the way of presentation. The content and the form of the program to be revised or reproduced have been determined with the cooperation of the expert group, a director and a scriptwriter. After deciding what unit or subject needs to be adapted for television, the production has been realized.

For the planning of a more reliable and effective media, and for the purpose of meeting the expectations of a changing student profile, we formed a new structure within the Open Education faculty- "Distance Education Planning Unit" (DEPU). A group of experts in their fields in this unit has begun to act to reform television programs as well as all technologies. DEPU has considered each project separately, and in the first stage it aims at determining the all objectives the students are supposed to gain. In accordance with this decision, DEPU first settles the order of information and then decides the means of tools it will be presented. And in the next stage, the established content is transformed into teaching material (books, television programs, web page etc.) The productions which the students have not received yet, and are still in progress, are planned to be presented to the learners in coming years. During this process, a media production director (MPD), who is also in charge of television programs, is generally responsible for media conception, planning and development. The MPD, who receives academic counseling during the production process, evaluates the produced material together with Project Coordinator and the Teaching Conception Directory, and if necessary, reproduces the materials. The studies of this group cover all the projects at the Open Education Faculty. With this respect, it has been aimed at increasing the influence of television as well as all materials and meeting the demands of the learners in a better way. (Personal communication, February 2000, DEPU presidency) At Open Education Faculty nearly 200 programs have been produced annually. Production elements mentioned below are used in the present production process:

### **Using people**

- Instructors
- Announcer/Speaker
- Players
- Field experts
- Common people

### **Using Visual Production Opportunities**

- Graphic materials (pictures, photographs, maps, tables, diagrams, caricatures, Illustrations, written texts etc.)
- Making use of real events (documents): (places, processes, procedures)
- Making use of objects (real or model)
- Making use of archive (image archives gathered from different sources)
- 2-D animation
- 3-D animation
- Dramatization

## TELEVISION BROADCAST

Broadcasting of the television programs of the Open Education Faculty has been realized by means of TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Institution) under the approval of the Counsel of Ministers. Prior to each academic year, the Open Education Faculty requests broadcasting time from this institution, and the hours suitable for the demands are reserved for the Open Education Faculty broadcastings. Broadcastings are shown on TRT 4, an educational channel, everyday during 24 weeks in that academic year. Day-time broadcasting which lasts 3 hours during weekday is re-broadcasted at nights. There is no repetition of the weekend broadcast on television.

Videotapes prepared according to broadcasting time are sent to TRT, Ankara. In the serials, besides the lecture programs, there are also programs such as News from Anadolu University and short programs. The Open Education Faculty television broadcasting covers a 3-hour broadcast reserved by another institution. During this time, there may be broadcasting of several lectures of the same department one after the other. Not to bore students and enable them to get ready for the next lecture, a new project was set up in this academic year. That is; between the lesson programs are sprinkled three minute-short programs. With these programs, which are generally documentary, it has been aimed at giving a cultural education as well. For this broadcasting year, nearly 70 short programs have been prepared.

Here is the Open Education Faculty television broadcasting hours:

Every weekday: 10:00 a.m.-13:00 p.m. On Saturdays 18:00- 21:00, on Sundays, 18:00-22:00.

Broadcasting days and hours of these programs are gathered in a broadcasting booklet and are sent to the learner at the beginning of the academic year. The broadcasting program is also available on the web page of the Anadolu University which is <http://www.aof.anadolu.edu.tr/a11.html>

Live television broadcasts of the Open Education Faculty have been executed in the Open Education Faculty studios by means of a transponder rented from TRT. (Personal communication, February 2000, Anadolu University, Radio and TV Production Center, The Presidency of Broadcast Planning and Coordination Unit).

## THE WAYS of USING TELEVISION AT OPEN EDUCATION FACULTY

### Student Support

Pettit, in his article titled "Learning To Swim Alone" which is about the learner support systems, points out that all distance education course elements can give learner support (Pettit, 1998, p. 259). According to his view, it is natural to use television, a multifunctional tool, in providing student support. Gibson emphasizes that giving support service to the students, though expensive, is a significant factor in passing from information to learning. (Gibson, 1998, pp.247-249).

Rowntree remarks that learners face some difficulty and problems in their own environment while they are learning and he also states that they may feel worried because of this. He lists these problems as feeling of being unable to learn on his own, fear of failure, and feeling like an outsider due to being outside of the faculty atmosphere. (Rowntree, 1994, p.218).

In short, while experts emphasize the importance of learner support, they also give emphasis to the need of individual support. With this respect, television at Open Education Faculty has characteristics of a massive support system rather than individual

one. It can be said that television at the Open Education Faculty is in a supplementary position for basic support services as well as for the content.

### **Supporting Role of Television Programs**

Television programs at the Open Education Faculty give the following services for the purpose of learner support:

- **Introductory Course Units** Purpose of these introductory units are to introduce aim of a new course, using television in their learning period and show students the way of the study which are broadcasted at the beginning of each project.
- **Selected Units** These program series are prepared with the purpose of supporting sections which are selected from the course syllabus. The choice of the subject matter of such programs series has been selected by the person in charge of the project, the director and the expert group. As the result of the choice of this committee, unit sections or contents within that unit section needed to be adapted for television are selected. For this reason, the number of each television program is different.
- **Full Units** This is a concept of televising the content of unit should be a parallel with to the books. Using television at the Open Education faculty, programs have been produced in accordance with the number of units for each lesson of each project for years. While an effort for renovation continues, some program series, which are still current and produced with this consideration, have still been broadcasted. But it is also planned that these programs should be renovated in time. (see "College of Engineering of Idoha" for this classification)

### **Supporting Role of Television Programs for Exams**

In teaching, television can be used interactively or one-way. In one-way teaching, by producing the programs beforehand, they can be delivered as videotapes or television broadcast. Contrary to this, interactive television strengthens the effect of teaching by allowing the participation of the audience. Live broadcast is a good way of broadcasting from the point of gaining interaction. Keeping this in mind, the Open Education Faculty has started two new practices in the academic year of 1998-1999.

First, from the results of mid-term and final exams processed by the Information Process Center, 10 lessons that learners have had difficulty with were chosen. At the first stage, questions answered incorrectly for the chosen lessons were selected, and television programs, where these questions are replied by the experts, have been prepared and broadcasted. The second practice is live broadcast. In this practice, lessons decided by the Information Process Center were announced to the students before broadcasting and informed that questions could be given either by fax or telephone before or during the broadcast. Learner participation for the two-hour programs lasted five days during the weekdays was huge. The same practice was carried out for a total of 10 lessons in March and September for the academic year of 1999-2000. Live broadcasts will continue for the same period and the number before final and make-up exams in the Open Education Faculty in the future.

### **Supporting Identity**

The aim of the ten-minute program, known as "News from Anadolu University" which added into the television programs since 1998, is to inform students and provide in them with a feeling of belonging to this faculty. The program, which is broadcasted once every two weeks for this purpose, is repeated throughout the two weeks. The content in this program is fixed during their usual meeting agenda by the news group preparing the program. The parts within the programs are as follow:

- **News:** Besides the information directly involving students such as the academic information of the Open Education Faculty, developments, changes (in exam days,

announcement of live broadcast etc.), culture-art and scientific activities scheduled at the university are also announced.

- **How to study?** In this part broadcasted in the academic year of 1998-1999, there was information about how the Open Education Faculty student should make use of their own educational materials as well as the important remarks for the exams.
- **A Portrait:** In this part of the program where an Open Education Faculty student or a student graduated from the faculty was introduced, individuals who have made use of this graduation in their work life, people who chose distance education as a second study (doctors, engineer, etc.) or those who have an interesting personality (such as being at the age of 70) or students graduated with degrees are chosen. In other word, suggestions which are encouraging and motivating the other students are reported by the student himself.
- **Communication Line:** In this section, frequently asked questions which come from students are answered by OEF administrators..

It has been observed that this program has reached its goals. For instance, after the announcement of the test exam on the Open Education Faculty web page, the number of the visitors to this web page increased and more questions about this exam were received. (Personal communication, February 2000, Anadolu University, Radio and TV Production Center, The Presidency of News Team)

#### **FUTURE of THE TELEVISION AND OPEN EDUCATION FACULTY'S RUNNING**

Sherry states that research consistently shows that television motivates the learners by attracting him/her and increases the interest in the learning process (Sherry, 1996, p. 337). Taking into consideration this and the opportunities television has provided, the use of television as a supportive educational tool at the Open Education Faculty will continue in the coming years as it has been since the first year. Especially with the studies started by the DEPU, it has been aimed at using television more effectively and meeting the expectations of the students by planning the television together with the other materials. The Open Education Faculty need to use television for many purposes. Turksat satellite, and developed telecommunication systems are being used, when necessary, for the Open Education Faculty services by renting.

In the coming years, besides record on tape broadcasting, live television broadcast and teleconferencing are expected to continue growing. Thus live programs and teleconferencing can be realize by means of these developing technologies.

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