

Rowan University

Rowan Digital Works

Theses and Dissertations

5-28-1997

The effect of radio distance education on Rowan University's image

Gregory C. Potter Jr.

Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>



Part of the [Public Relations and Advertising Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Potter, Gregory C. Jr., "The effect of radio distance education on Rowan University's image" (1997).
Theses and Dissertations. 2104.
<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/2104>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact graduateresearch@rowan.edu.

THE EFFECT OF RADIO DISTANCE EDUCATION ON
ROWAN UNIVERSITY'S IMAGE

by
Gregory C. Potter Jr.

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree in the Graduate Division
of Rowan University
May 28, 1997

Approved by _____

Date Approved 5-28-97

Thesis Abstract

Gregory C. Potter Jr.

**The effect of radio distance education on Rowan University's image
1997**

Mr. Anthony Fulginiti

Communication, Public Relations

This study determined the effects a distance education course on Rowan University's campus radio station has on the image of the institution. The study also examined how a distance education program could enable Rowan to reach the goals of its strategic plan.

Four focus groups of Rowan University students revealed their attitudes about the university's image, distance education, radio as a medium for distance education and what effects distance education has on collegiate image. The focus groups included traditional and non-traditional students, students enrolled in the radio distance education course at Rowan University and students not enrolled in the course.

Students feel convenience contributes to Rowan University's image and is also the greatest advantage of distance education courses. Students also report a distance education program would enhance the image of the institution; however, radio is not the most popular medium for distance education courses. Rowan students prefer interactive distance education courses, not related to their major course of study, offered via internet, television or video.

This study revealed both traditional and non-traditional student attitudes concerning distance education, which could enhance collegiate image.

Thesis Mini Abstract

Gregory C. Potter Jr.

**The effect of radio distance education on Rowan University's image
1997**

Mr. Anthony Fulginiti

Communication, Public Relations

This study determined the effects of a radio distance education course on Rowan University's image and how a distance education program could enable the institution to reach the goals of its strategic plan. In four focus panels Rowan students reported convenience as a leading contributor to Rowan's image and also the greatest advantage of distance education courses. Students prefer interactive distance education courses, not related to their majors, offered via internet, television or video. The study revealed both traditional and non-traditional students attitudes concerning distance education, which could enhance collegiate image.

Table of Contents

Chapter One - Introduction.....	2
Chapter Two- Literature Review.....	11
Chapter Three- Study Design.....	34
Chapter Four- Data Analysis.....	38
Chapter Five- Summary/Interpretation.....	49

Chapter One

Introduction

Since its introduction, radio has been closely tied to education as a potentially effective medium for teaching. However, despite numerous studies citing radio's efficacy for instruction, few colleges and universities offer courses via radio for credit. Education has played a minimal role in a medium in which it is very effective. Most college radio stations are concerned with providing new music and cultural programming, not with providing academic instruction.¹

Given today's widespread interest in distance education, the expansion of instruction to students outside the classroom at home or at another institution, radio's role in education needs to be re-evaluated. Non-traditional students with limited time and students unable to reach a college campus take courses and often receive degrees through distance education programs.² The Open University of South Florida opened in 1972 with 64 enrolled students and today provides a variety of courses, at a distance, to over 7,000 students through several media including television and radio.³

Radio has been a vehicle for distance education for nearly 30 years. The

¹ Duby, A. (1989). Educational Radio: We can learn from other countries' experience. Internal Report ERTV, South African Broadcasting Corporation. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 304097), 27.

² Moore, R. (Director). (1981). Audio Alternatives for Learning. Buckhannon, West Virginia: Department of Education Media Services, West Virginia Wesleyan College, 2.

³ Wilson, T. (1989) Open University at the University of Southern Florida: An assessment of Distance Learning Procedures. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 306862), 1-2.

University of Wisconsin broadcast the first distance education program on their radio station 9XM (later called WHA) in 1917.⁴ At Purdue University, more than 8,500 hours of college credit have been earned since 1970 in radio courses broadcast on WBAA, the campus radio station.⁵ Recently, music education courses have been offered on college radio stations at Saddlebrook College and Rowan University. Northeastern University produces "A Note For You," a weekly, 60 minute music education program, with WGBH, a public radio station in Boston. Music education is conducive to radio because like music, radio produces emotional responses from its listeners.⁶

Radio's ability to educate is not limited to music education. The University of Mid-America offers an undergraduate history program called "Foundations of American Nationalism." The radio course consists of 30 half-hour programs, a study guide, readings and a pool of test items.⁷ Foreign radio broadcasts are also used extensively in foreign language instruction as supplements to classroom instruction.⁸

Radio distance education courses often require supplemental materials to make up for their lack of visual elements, which are conducive to learning in most students.

⁴ Buckland, M. & Dye, C. (1991). The Development of Electronic Distance Education Delivery Systems in the U.S. Chicago, paper presented at the Mid-Western Education Research Association's 13th annual meeting, 5.

⁵ Duby, 27.

⁶ Nadeau, R. (December 1984). On The Air. Music Educator's Journal, 60-68.

⁷ Duby, 28.

⁸ Nelson, R. & Wood, R. (1975). Radio in Foreign Language Education. ERIC series on language and linguistics, Arlington. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED104157), 2.

However, the lack of visual aids is an advantage in some courses, such as poetry or literature. In an audio-only presentation, students allow their minds to create mental images without visual distractions. Students to use their imaginations undistracted, which leads to more intelligent and purposeful reading.⁹

While no single media has been determined most effective for distance education, each instructional mode has its strengths and weaknesses.¹⁰ Presenting courses at a distance via radio offers several advantages. While newer technologies offer many distance education options, including video and computer courses, radio is a viable and cost-effective medium for lecture-based courses. Radio courses can cost nearly 20 times less than television courses to produce and many institutions already have radio technology in place.¹¹ Radios are portable, easy to use and accessible to nearly everyone, making radio courses highly convenient to students.¹²

In an effort to make their institutions more convenient to students, colleges and universities increasingly turn to distance education. Distance education can bring the institution to the people rather than the people to the institution.¹³ This user-friendly

⁹ Willey, G. (1986). Audiocassette: A literature course from the Bay Area Television Consortium. In J. Zigerell (Ed.) Expanding the community college community. American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, Issues Series No. 3. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED271182), 12-13.

¹⁰ Ash, B (1986). Non-traditional Education's Modalities and Implications for Higher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED271054), 23.

¹¹ Willey, 10.

¹² Moore, 4.

¹³ Ibid., 2.

philosophy also presents a useful marketing tactic. A college or university that provides distance education to students in a simple and convenient manner could make that school a more attractive choice to certain students. Thus, distance education programs could help to enhance the public image of an institution.

Rowan University, for example, is striving to enhance its public image with a strategic plan for the years 1997 to 2001. The plan recommends programs and objectives for the growth of the institution, including the development of distance education technology.¹⁴ Rowan has developed a video-based distance education classroom connected to other institutions in New Jersey, that can receive and share lectures around the state.¹⁵ The university also provides one distance learning, music education course via radio, *The Growth and Development of Jazz*. Distance education at Rowan University is certain to expand, but radio's role is not clear.¹⁶

Problem Statement

Does distance education on 89.7 WGLS-FM at Rowan University fulfill the goals of the college mission and therefore enhance the institution's image? This study will examine how radio distance education can enhance Rowan University's image, help the

¹⁴ Platt, C. (November 21, 1996) CPC unveils Rowan Plan for next five years. The Whit, Rowan College of New Jersey, 1.

¹⁵ Cardona, J. (November 6, 1996). Distance learning expands Rowan's reach. The Rowan Report, 1.

¹⁶ Kerr, T. (Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, Rowan College of New Jersey). (November, 1996), interview by author.

college market itself more effectively and help the institution meet the goals proposed in its strategic plan for the next five years.

Rowan's strategic plan includes several goals to be met by 2001. One projected goal of the plan is to develop a nurturing learning environment in and out of the classroom, both on and off campus. This college community will bring together faculty, students, staff and administration in an integrated learning experience that celebrates the achievements of every member. The concept of teaching will expand beyond the classroom and distance education is a part of that goal.¹⁷

Another goal of Rowan's strategic plan is to provide everyone in the college community with access to the technology they need. Technology should be used intelligently in the classroom or in residences. This would include the use of distance education technologies on and off campus.¹⁸ Rowan also plans to develop a University College that will cater mainly to non-traditional, part-time commuter students. Providing convenient courses to this group will necessitate the use of distance education.¹⁹

Distance education can be expensive to implement if the proper technology does not already exist on campus or in the homes of the student. Because the Rowan plan calls for the implementation of new programs with as many existing resources as possible,

¹⁷ Rowan University Planning Committee. (1996). The Rowan University Plan: FY 1997-2001. Glassboro, NJ, 3-4.

¹⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹⁹ Ibid., 15.

radio would be an efficient and cost-effective medium for the college to employ.²⁰ 89.7 WGLS-FM is in place at Rowan University and one course has already been tested on the station.

This study will determine how a distance education program via radio could be used to enhance the college's image and influence students to select a college. The study will also examine how courses on the radio station could help the university meet the goals of its strategic plan. Fulfilling the college mission has inherent public relations implications. The institution can market itself to more potential students if it can offer convenient services and courses in a variety of media.²¹ According to Dr. Thomas Kerr, one way Rowan University can enhance its image is by presenting itself as a "quality institution." This would include improving the college's ability to teach, reaching out to more students and the community and providing students with the latest technology. Distance education plays a major role in fulfilling all of these criteria.²²

Delimitations

This study examined distance education via radio at the college level on college-operated radio stations. It does include the uses of radio for elementary and secondary education. Research is limited to educational radio college courses broadcast in the United States. The research does not include the effectiveness of other distance education

²⁰ Ibid., 8.

²¹ Kerr.

²² Ibid.

media such as television, interactive video or the internet.

The study focused specifically on how distance education courses broadcast on 89.7 WGLS-FM at Rowan University can enhance the institution's image. Four focus groups of traditional and non-traditional Rowan University students. Students who participated in *The Growth and Development of Jazz* radio course were studied. Subjects were questioned only on how distance education affects their perception of a college, and then specifically how radio courses affect their perceptions of distance education and college image.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine if radio is a viable medium for Rowan University to explore when expanding its distance education programs. If courses offered on WGLS can enhance the image of the university then they would help to achieve the goals set forth in the Rowan University mission and strategic plan.

The author hypothesized that a college radio station can provide a cost-effective medium for distance education and help Rowan University to reach goals defined in its strategic plan. For the purpose of the study, five criteria were developed for the advantages of radio distance education:

- 1. Radio distance education is convenient to students who cannot reach a college campus**
- 2. Radio distance education can help a college reach new audiences who could not otherwise take college courses, because it improves access to education**
- 3. Radio distance education saves time for students, who can listen to lectures they cannot attend, and teachers who can lecture to many more students than could fit into one classroom at one lecture**

4. Radio distance education provides safety to students who prefer not to roam through a college campus after dark
5. Radio distance education is cost effective compared to other media.

Interviews with college marketing personnel resulted in the following five criteria of what comprises a "college image:" cost, convenience, strength of professors, academic image and safety.

In this study classroom instruction at Rowan University is assumed to be effective and students are generally pleased with existing programs. Radio distance education courses should strive to provide a learning experience that is as effective as classroom instruction, often at a greater convenience to the student. It is also assumed that the targeted audiences have a general concept of distance education and can provide reasons why such programs could enhance a college's image.

Procedure

Research included a search of ERIC for sources related to distance education and instructional radio. A message posted on the LISTSERV of the National Association of College Broadcasters found other college radio stations in the country currently offering courses for credit on the air. A search of the Rowan University Library card catalog and periodical holdings was conducted for distance education, instructional radio programs and methods and information about the Rowan University strategic plan. An internet search was conducted using the Alta Vista, Excite, Infoseek, Metacrawler, Webcrawler and Yahoo! search engines with a variety of key words, including "distance education,"

"college radio," "instructional radio" and "radio education."

Terminology

Distance education- providing instruction to students outside the classroom through various media.

Non-traditional student- a college student who does not attend college immediately after completing high school

Strategic plan- a marketing tool which includes goals to improve an institution's image and programs over a predetermined period

Traditional student- a student who enters college immediately after graduating from high school

Chapter Two

As a foundation for the study, a comprehensive search of the literature was conducted. Topics in the search included "distance education and learning," "radio instruction and education," "college and university radio," and "distance education and public relations, image and marketing." A search of ERIC, dissertation abstracts, master's theses abstracts and periodicals was conducted at the Rowan University library. No dissertations or master's theses directly related to the study were found; however, approximately 20 ERIC documents related to radio instruction and five articles related to radio and distance education were found. A search of the Rowan University card catalog produced one book important to the study: Radio for education and development by Dean Jamison and Emile McAnany. A comprehensive search of the internet was conducted on search engines including Alta Vista, Excite, Info Seek, Lycos, Metacrawler, Webcrawler and Yahoo. The search produced several strategic plans of institutions implementing distance education programs. Also found were approximately ten articles on radio and audio instruction.

The literature review revealed little information related specifically to radio distance education and its role in "college image." However, the search did reveal information about the marketing potential of general distance education programs, in which radio may be included. To increase enrollment, institutions must offer alternatives to traditional education in order to meet the changing needs of students. In this sense, distance education can have a major impact on the image and marketing potential of a

college or university. The development of distance education programs makes college courses available to a larger audience that does not have to travel to the campus or even be in the same region of the country.²³

A great deal of current distance education literature ignores radio as a channel for instruction or mentions it only in passing. While many institutions are examining the use of distance education and expanding their distance education programs, few are using radio. The literature search provided much research conducted on the effectiveness of radio instruction and much information on the history and use of radio instruction.

Radio has been a useful tool for instruction since the technology was introduced. In 1917 the University of Wisconsin broadcast a music education program over 9XM, a college-owned transmitter which later became WHA.²⁴ The first institution to operate an officially licensed radio station was the Latter Day Saints University in Salt Lake City, Utah in 1921.²⁵

Distance education programs on radio were broadcast regularly by many institutions across the country during the 1920s. The University of Chicago broadcast lectures directly from its classrooms on WMAQ in 1922. By 1926, the university was airing a morning history course, an evening lectures series on various educational topics

²³ Kaye, D. Marketing Distance Education. (1997). (Indiana University). World Wide Web, <http://copper.ucs.indiana.edu/~djaye/MarketingDE.html>. Ivyland, PA: Voicenet.

²⁴ Buckland, M. & Dye, C. (1991). The development of electronic distance education delivery systems in the U.S. Mid-Western Education Research Association, Chicago, Mid-Western Education Research Association 13th Annual Meeting, 5.

²⁵ Ibid., 5.

and a book review program prepared by its English department.²⁶ In 1924, WEAF in New York broadcast a series of ten 20-minute lectures on the poetry of Robert Browning from Columbia University. The topic of poetry was chosen because it was considered "light" enough for radio listeners to follow.²⁷ In 1925, the State Bureau of Education in Massachusetts enrolled over 4,500 listeners in 21 extension courses broadcast on radio station WBZ.²⁸ Penn State offered instructional radio courses nationally in the 1920s.²⁹ KDKA in Pittsburgh, one of the first broadcast stations in the country, installed a studio at the University of Pittsburgh in 1924. Over the next four years, KDKA aired over 700 educational programs from the university.³⁰

WHAA at the University of Iowa was one of the first institutions to present courses for credit via radio. In 1925, the college offered *The Psychology of Learning*, *Modern English*, *Current Social and Economical Problems*, *Appreciation of Literature*, and *the American Constitutional System*. Of the 76 students enrolled, most of whom were school teachers, 64 completed the courses.³¹ The radio courses reached a peak enrollment

²⁶ Leach, E. (January-March, 1983.) Tuning out education - The cooperation doctrine in radio, 1922-38. *Current*, 3.

²⁷ Ibid., 3.

²⁸ Ibid., 3.

²⁹ History of distance education. (1996). (Penn State) World Wide Web, <http://www.cde.psu.edu>. Ivyland, PA: Voicenet.

³⁰ Leach, 3.

³¹ Pittman, V. (July 14-17, 1986). Pioneering instructional radio in the U.S.: five years of frustration at the University of Iowa, 1925-1930. Oxford, U.K., 3.

of 97 students in the fall of 1925. In successive terms, enrollment rapidly declined and the courses ended altogether in 1927.³²

The University of Iowa felt their instructional radio courses ultimately failed for several reasons. There was a general lack of faculty interest and cooperation. When the novelty of radio education wore off teachers objected to providing extra work for little extra pay. The university failed to create an adequate faculty-reward system. The courses were faced with technical difficulties as well. WSUI, the university's radio station, was forced by federal regulation to change frequencies and share frequencies with other schools. This change certainly was a cause of confusion for many students. Finally, the university failed to identify a target population for the courses, and therefore a continuing audience was never developed.³³

Despite obvious limitations, many educators still felt radio had a role to play in providing instruction to a mass audience. In 1927 the National Education Association organized the Preliminary Committee in Educational Broadcasting to discuss the feasibility of developing a national "school of the air," which would provide distance education across the country.³⁴ The Ohio School of the Air, which began broadcasting instructional programs in 1929 with financial support from the state, included courses in current events, art appreciation, and geography. Founder Ben Dartow realized the importance of supplemental print materials to coincide with the radio broadcasts and

³² Pittman, 4.

³³ Ibid., 6.

³⁴ Buckland, 9.

provided them on a monthly basis to teachers and students. The Ohio School of the Air seemed to benefit its students but could not survive after it lost funding from the Ohio legislature. The school did make three important contributions to the development of educational radio; it provided a model for other courses and schools, it proved that radio could be effectively used for instruction and it provided early research data about radio instruction.³⁵ However, the radio industry was quickly losing interest in supporting educational programming. The medium was becoming a big business as broadcasters were discovering the profitability of radio advertising. While universities battled for their own frequencies, the FRC generally favored those who had the means to produce the most polished programming: the commercial stations.³⁶

In the 1930's only 13 universities offered radio courses for credit and more disappeared by 1940.³⁷ Educational radio fell behind the commercial industry of the 1920's and 1930's due to lack of funds, power and expertise. Commercial broadcasters were able to convince federal regulators, the public and many educators that independent non-commercial broadcasting was unnecessary.³⁸ From a business perspective, this type of programming was not going to grab a large audience and therefore not provide the

³⁵ McReynolds, A. (1995) Educational Radio, 1921-1960. World Wide Web, <http://cooper.ucs.indiana.edu/~amcreyno/page1.html>. Ivyland, PA: Voicenet.

³⁶ Leach, 3.

³⁷ Pittman, 2.

³⁸ Leach, 2.

station with advertising dollars.³⁹

Many groups formed in the 1930's to rally for the support of radio instruction. The Institute for Education by Radio, the Advisory Committee on Education by Radio and the National Committee on Education by Radio all championed radio instruction and called for common ground among educational broadcasters.⁴⁰ Most of these organizations were split into two distinct groups; those who wanted to work with commercial stations to broadcast educational programs and those who wanted independence. Because of a general lack of unity, educators had a hard time making a case against the commercial stations and many educators lost interest or developed a sense of apathy towards educational radio.⁴¹

Amid these protests, the Federal Radio Commission formed the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education in 1930 to promote a "Cooperation Doctrine" between educators and commercial stations. Educational and public interest programming would be developed through the cooperation among commercial stations, non-profit organizations and universities.⁴² Cooperation resulted in minimal time for educational programming and only those programs that were well liked and well presented survived on commercial stations. Some educational programs which gained an audience were *Aspects of the Depression, Psychology Today, You and Your Government, Economic*

³⁹ Leach, 8.

⁴⁰ Buckland, 11.

⁴¹ McReynolds.

⁴² Leach, 2.

World Today and *Coping With Crime*. One of the most successful of the educational programs of this era was the *University of Chicago Round Table* which featured professors discussing current issues.⁴³

The Cooperation Doctrine delayed national resources from going to non-commercial stations. Commercial broadcasters controlled the financial aspect of the industry and cooperation eventually fell by the wayside as federal regulators eased their stance on the issue. When the government revamped the FRC with the Communication Act of 1934, which formed the Federal Communications Commission, educational broadcasting gained little ground. The FCC ruled against reserving channels for non-commercial stations in 1935 and adopted the cooperation philosophy.⁴⁴

Eventually the FCC began to take a more serious stand on non-commercial broadcasting, but educators had to assume a much lesser role in what had become a large and profitable business.⁴⁵ The FCC took notice of many institutions asking for their own frequencies in 1938 and supplied educators with 25 AM channels for a new class of stations called "non-commercial educational." Equipment was not widely available to broadcast on these frequencies, but the move set the stage for educators to move into the newly developed FM band.⁴⁶ In 1945, the FCC reserved the first 20 of the 100 new FM

⁴³ Leach, 12.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁶ Buckland, 19-20.

channels for the "non-commercial educational" stations.⁴⁷ With the rise of the FM band, educators were determined to take a hold of their portion of the frequencies and not repeat the same mistakes made during the struggle in the AM band.⁴⁸ The first educational FM station to go on the air was WBOE of Cleveland, Ohio, which began broadcasting in 1944. By 1945, 24 licenses had been issued to the "non-commercial educational" stations.⁴⁹

Since the development of the non-commercial FM frequencies, most college radio stations have devoted much of their time to programming to cultural radio and very little to actual instruction. "College radio" became a medium for public service programming and a home to experimental music which commercial stations would not play.⁵⁰ In 1967 Congress passed the Public Broadcasting Act, which declared that it was in the public interest to encourage the growth and development of public radio and television broadcasting. These media should be used for instructional, educational and cultural purposes.⁵¹ National Public Radio, formed in 1971, was designed to make grants directly to public radio stations and to produce and distribute programs, most of which were not

⁴⁷ Buckland, 19-20.

⁴⁸ Leach, 16.

⁴⁹ Buckland, 21.

⁵⁰ Duby, A. (1988). Educational Radio: We can learn from other countries' experience. Internal Report ERTV, South African Broadcasting Corporation. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED304097), 45.

⁵¹ Why do we have public TV and public radio? World Wide Web, <http://etv.state.ms.us/philosophy.html>. Ivyland, PA: Voicenet.

instructional but cultural and public service programs.⁵²

While public service programming became the norm, many college radio stations have continued to provide instructional programs, including some courses for credit. At Purdue University, more than 8,500 hours of college credit have been earned since 1970 in radio courses broadcast on WBAA, the campus station.⁵³ The University of Mid-America has offered an undergraduate history program called *Foundations of America Nationalism*.⁵⁴ WNCN in New York has broadcast a Saturday morning music education program called *Musichox*.⁵⁵ Another music education program has been successful on public radio station WGBH in Boston. *A Note For You*, hosted by Roland Nadeau, is a sixty minute music instruction program funded jointly by WGBH and Northeastern University.⁵⁶

Several college radio stations currently provide courses for credit including Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. *The Growth and Development of Jazz*, hosted by Dennis DiBlazio, is a weekly two-hour program for which students enroll as they would for any three-credit class. Enrollment for Rowan's jazz radio course has

⁵² Buckland, 45.

⁵³ Duby, 27.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 28.

⁵⁵ Horowitz, I. (March 30, 1991). WNCN pitches classics to New York's school kids. Billboard, 45.

⁵⁶ Nadeau, R. (December, 1984). On the air. Music Educator's Journal, 60-68.

averaged about 200 students per semester.⁵⁷ Other schools currently offer similar music education programs including Burlington County College in New Jersey and Saddlebrook College in California. STEP Star Schools Network offers three college courses including Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology which are available as audio-only instruction or via television and computers.⁵⁸

Evaluation of existing research

Educators have conducted many studies to determine the effectiveness of radio instruction compared to classroom teaching and other vehicles for distance education. In 1930, H. L. Eubank concluded from his studies that current events courses supplemented with radio broadcasts were more effective than those taught without radio.⁵⁹ A similar study was conducted in 1940 by M. Kimball Wiles, who wrote that students learned more about current events by listening to radio broadcasts than they did studying the same topics in the classroom.⁶⁰ A 1945 study conducted by Woelfel and Tyler looked at how much a group of students reading material learned compared to a group of students listening to the same material on the radio. The researchers found no significant difference between the radio and listening groups and that both seemed to

⁵⁷ DiBlazio, D. (Professor of Music, Rowan University). (December 23, 1996), interview by author.

⁵⁸ The best of the old and new. (1996). STAR Step Schools Network. World Wide Web, <http://www.esdtcom.wednet.edu/ssabout/html>. Ivyland, PA: Voicenet.

⁵⁹ Moore, 7.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 7.

learn the material equally well.⁶¹ Popham studied the effectiveness of using audio tape recorded lectures versus live lectures in 1961. He found there also found no significant difference in student achievement.⁶²

In 1962, Carl H. Ketchan and Robert N. Heath conducted two college education courses. One was presented as a traditional classroom course and one was presented as a series of recorded lectures. They found no significant differences in measured learning among the students who took the course by either method.⁶³ In 1967 Chu and Schramm determined that radio can teach effectively, especially when accompanied with supplemental materials, and that learning seems to be affected more by what is delivered than the delivery medium.⁶⁴ In 1970, Forsythe conducted a study in which he concluded that radio was effective for education. He found radio was generally as effective as conventional methods and visual elements were not always necessary or even important. He determined that audio-only presentations could be more effective in certain applications.⁶⁵

A study conducted in 1974 by Jamison, Suppes and Wells further supports

⁶¹ Russel, T. (Director, Office of Instructional Telecommunications, North Carolina State University). (1996). The "no-significant difference phenomenon. World Wide Web, <http://tenb.mta.ca/phenom/phenom.html>. Ivyland, PA: Voicenet.

⁶² Russel.

⁶³ Moore, 7.

⁶⁴ Jamison, D. & McAnany E. (1978). Radio for Education and Development. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 30.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 31.

Forsythe's conclusion that radio is as effective as traditional teaching methods in most subjects. The researchers noted a lack of research pertaining to the effectiveness of instructional radio. They called for more research, survey or experimental, is highly desirable due to the potential economic significance of instructional radio in developing countries.⁶⁶

Agreement and disagreement in the field

Educators have used radio to reach students at a distance for many years. Those unable to reach a campus, students with handicaps, those geographically isolated or students with financial limitations can benefit from courses offered via radio.⁶⁷ Experts of instruction via radio Dean Jamison and Emile McAnany define three advantages radio provides to education: radio lowers costs, improves access to education and improves educational quality and relevance.⁶⁸ George Willey, in his handbook to presenting audio courses, refers to three basic elements of the audio course. The course must include a local instructor, the audio subject matter and supporting text materials for the student. Willey believes the traditional role of the instructor shifts from lecturer to student advisor and overseer. With recorded lectures and additional text, the audio course is a much different experience than a traditional classroom course. Willey adds that the student do more than simply listen to the broadcasts. To benefit from an audio course students must

⁶⁶ Jamison, 31.

⁶⁷ Moore, 2.

⁶⁸ Jamison, 12.

spend time studying and reviewing relevant texts as they would in any course.⁶⁹

In her internal report to ERTV, the South African Broadcasting Corporation, Aliza Duby outlines four dominant characteristics of a successful radio course:

1. programs must be arranged in order to assist cumulative learning
2. lectures should be planned in consultation with external educational advisors
3. courses should be supplemented with printed materials
4. lectures and their success or failure should be evaluated by faculty and students.⁷⁰

In their handbook of distance education, W. Harris and J. Williams categorize the uses for radio in education into three areas. The first category is radio's innate ability to teach through direct academic lectures. These lectures can replace traditional classroom experiences while providing verbal interpretation of text materials with dramatic case studies.⁷¹ The second category concerns learner-oriented uses for radio. Learner involvement can be emphasized to strengthen the student's understanding of the material. The intimacy of radio, inflection and variety of voice and audible human contact can often stimulate learning more effectively than text materials.⁷²

The third category defined in the handbook is radio's ability to transmit general information. News and information can be broadcast towards educational objectives and supplement a course. Instructions, facts and publicity about a course can be effectively

⁶⁹ Willey, 7.

⁷⁰ Duby, 29.

⁷¹ Harris, W. & Williams, J. (1978). A handbook on distance education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED162053), 27.

⁷² Ibid., 27-28.

communicated on the radio.⁷³

Listening to news and information broadcast from other countries makes radio an effective tool for foreign language instruction as well. Students can expand their knowledge of foreign culture through shortwave radio broadcasts and listening to regular shortwave broadcasts can stimulate learning. Students may find themselves in an "alien" setting and discover the intricacies of a foreign culture or language while listening to shortwave radio broadcasts.⁷⁴

Students can use newscasts, speeches, interviews and commentaries broadcast on radio as course supplements in a variety of subjects.⁷⁵ Some institutions offer courses in which radio broadcasts are only a supplement or part of the instruction. Correspondence courses can be supplemented by radio lectures which expand upon ideas within the text. Courses can also be structured with text and radio broadcasts as two equally important elements of the instruction.⁷⁶

Radio has been an effective element of many music education courses. Roland Nadeau, host of WGBH's "A Note For You," feels radio is an especially powerful medium for music education because it produces emotional responses in its listeners and

⁷³ Harris, 28.

⁷⁴ Nelson, R. and Wood, R. (April 1975). Radio in foreign language instruction. ERIC series on language and linguistics, Arlington. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED104157), 3.

⁷⁵ Garfinkel, A. (1975). Outline for a contemporary civilization course based on radio. LBRIG Newsletter, Perdue University, Layfayette, IN, 5.

⁷⁶ Harris, 30.

music itself can induce many emotional responses from the listener.⁷⁷ However, to produce the most effective response from the listener, radio courses must entertain the listener while it attempts to teach them.⁷⁸

While no single medium has been determined best for distance education, radio has many inherent advantages.⁷⁹ Audio instruction has been referred to as a "theater for the mind," and often has the ability to stimulate the imagination, encouraging students to develop mental images. Creative participation can help students develop listening skills, improve their recall of information heard, and help them better analyze what they hear.⁸⁰ Radio's general lack of visual aids can be an advantage for certain types of courses. A poetry course may benefit from an audio-only presentation as students can develop mental images without visual distractions.⁸¹ Television literature courses often provide dramatizations, which keep the viewer from developing their own mental images. Radio provides the listener with an intimate connection to the lecturer and allows the student to use their imaginations, which often leads to more intelligent and purposeful reading.⁸²

Another advantage of radio distance education courses is their cost. A television

⁷⁷ Nadeau, 61.

⁷⁸ Harris, 29.

⁷⁹ Ash, B. (1986) Non-traditional education's modalities and implications for high education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED271054), 23.

⁸⁰ Moore, 5.

⁸¹ Willey, 12-13

⁸² Ibid., 13

course can cost almost 20 times more to create than one on radio.⁸³ Radio can reach an audience as large as television, the portability of the medium provides easy access to students and the equipment is generally easy to use.⁸⁴ Many television courses does not need their visual elements to effectively teach and these courses could be broadcast on radio without any reduction in effectiveness, but with a reduction of cost.⁸⁵ The most effective medium is not always the most complex, however, the key to producing a successful distance education course is using the medium properly.⁸⁶

Despite radio's ability to teach, many radio courses have failed because of two major limitations. First, many courses are marred by a narrow and limited concept in which audio provides the only material. Second, many instructors fail to structure a well-rounded course and add some production value to the recordings or live audio.⁸⁷ Student limitations can often hamper the medium's ability to teach. Radio is only able to communicate if it has the close and undivided attention of its listener.

Some students may find radio education difficult because they have trouble concentrating on sound communication alone. Distractions from other sounds or the

⁸³ Willey, 10.

⁸⁴ Moore, 4.

⁸⁵ Wilson, T. (1989). Open University of Southern Florida: an assessment of distance learning procedures. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED306862), 5.

⁸⁶ Jamison, 34.

⁸⁷ Willey, 8.

student's limited ability to learn without visual aids can prevent them from learning.⁸⁸ Because radio is a passing medium, inattentive or slow-thinking students cannot have material repeated and almost every listener encounters this problem at least once during a broadcast. Even for the most attentive students, hearing is only a part of the education process. Practical use and application are generally necessary for true learning.⁸⁹

Technical problems often interfere with the learning process. Radio interference or problems with radio equipment can result in lost information, which cannot be accessed again unless it is rebroadcast.⁹⁰ Supplemental print materials help to alleviate this problem. The Open University of South Florida has found satisfaction and grades of distance learners are dependent on the strength of the supplemental print materials. These texts must be carefully produced and correlate closely with the broadcast information to be effective.⁹¹ The addition of print materials also includes an important visual element for the listener, who is stimulated to actively participate in the process.⁹²

The lack of interaction between students and instructors is a disadvantage of all distance education because two-way communication is an essential ingredient of the education process. Radio courses can include a telephone network to exchange

⁸⁸ Harris, 26

⁸⁹ Ibid., 26-27

⁹⁰ Ibid., 26.

⁹¹ Wilson, 5.

⁹² Harris, 27.

information and allow students to pose questions.⁹³ Distance education courses are more effective if instructors keep regular office and telephone hours for students and provide on-campus meetings.⁹⁴ Groups which meet on campus to discuss the radio broadcasts assist the learning process.⁹⁵ Assignments and tests submitted and mailed back and forth are an effective means of communication.⁹⁶ The Open University of South Florida tackles the interaction problem with highly structured workbooks in which students are required to participate in activities based on the broadcast material to further their comprehension. The university has found these exercises eliminate many questions students may have without them. The workbooks lessen, but do not eliminate the need for communication.⁹⁷

Relationship of the study to the field

Many universities are searching for new ways to reach and attract students because of decreasing enrollment and demographic shifts.⁹⁸ Many of these students are no longer the traditional college age. One third of all college students are older than the 18 to 22 year-old, fresh out of high school. One of every five American adults are enrolled in

⁹³ Buckland, 58.

⁹⁴ Wilson, 7.

⁹⁵ Harris, 29.

⁹⁶ Moore, 3.

⁹⁷ Wilson, 6.

⁹⁸ Cirasa Parish, A. M., (1993) Shaping graduate education's future: implications of demographic shifts for the twenty-first century. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education. Ottawa, Canada, 38.

some form of education or training.⁹⁹ Distance education programs not only offer a flexible alternative to the traditional classroom course to non-traditional students but also provide convenience to other diverse student populations.¹⁰⁰

Faculty and students who have evaluated the distance education programs at the Open University of South Florida found the programs fulfill the university's mission to offer effective education to students who could not otherwise attend classes.¹⁰¹ Radio distance education courses are an efficient way to provide distance education because they save time and money for students while using a medium that is effective and easy to use.¹⁰² While radio instruction has lacked planning and funding in the past, it is a simple and cost-effective medium for distance education that may have a future.¹⁰³

Today many institutions consider distance education a vital element of the college curriculum. Rowan University is no exception; distance education plays a major role in the college's strategic plan for the next five years. Rowan's associate provost for academic affairs, Dr. Thomas Kerr feels distance education is closely tied to the college's vision of moving towards university status. Kerr says, "We can't move forward without distance education options available to students. It brings Rowan University to the students and in turn brings others into the college." Kerr feels these students coming into the institution

⁹⁹ Moore, 6.

¹⁰⁰ Cirasa Parish, 3.

¹⁰¹ Wilson, 12.

¹⁰² Moore, 6.

¹⁰³ Ash, 22.

will mainly come from an audience which had previously been untapped.¹⁰⁴

Rowan University is currently expanding its distance education programs. A distance learning classroom installed in 1996 will be connected to the New Jersey Inter-Campus Network, which provides courses, speakers and video conferencing to institutions throughout the state.¹⁰⁵ Rowan has offered a radio course on the campus station since 1994 called *The Growth and Development of Jazz*. The two-hour Sunday night broadcasts are hosted by Rowan music professor Dennis DiBlazio and generally draw 250 to 275 students per semester. The largest problem to contend with has been the lack of interaction between students and the instructor. DiBlazio says the course has been successful and improvements have been made since the first broadcasts such as supplemental texts and projects which require students to attend jazz performances on campus. DiBlazio feels that radio could be expanded to include a variety of other courses but interaction must be further improved for the courses to be effective.¹⁰⁶

Interaction is essential to the learning environment aspect of the Rowan University strategic plan. The college hopes to offer a nurturing environment in and out of the classroom both on and off campus. The concept of teaching outside the classroom certainly includes distance education but interaction must be present for a meaningful

¹⁰⁴ Kerr, T. (Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, Rowan University) (November 1996), interview by author.

¹⁰⁵ Cardona, J. (November 6, 1996) Distance learning expands Rowan's reach. The Rowan Report, 1.

¹⁰⁶ DiBlazio.

learning experience.¹⁰⁷ The Rowan plan also calls for every member of the college community to have access to technology. Technology should be used intelligently in the classroom and in student residences both on and off campus. Distance education programs are a major step towards reaching this goal.¹⁰⁸ Rowan also plans to develop the University College concept, a set of programs designed to meet the needs of part-time, non-traditional commuter students. These programs are to be offered in the most convenient manner to this audience. Distance education through a variety of media have been found to be effective in reaching this audience.¹⁰⁹

Reaching non-traditional students through distance education presents a new set of challenges to instructors. Distance education often requires more preparation time than traditional classroom teaching. The effectiveness of the teaching often depends on the instructor's mastery of the medium being used. Distance education requires that instructors pay closer attention to student motivation and make themselves available to students. Interaction is essential for effective distance education and can be achieved many ways including telephone and office hours, mail and electronic mail.¹¹⁰

In order to succeed, distance education programs require effective organizational communications. With its diversity of activities, the nature of its students and externally

¹⁰⁷ Rowan University Planning Committee. (1996). The Rowan University Plan FY: 1997-2001., 3-4.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 15.

¹¹⁰ Moore & Kearsley. (1996). Study guide for distance education. World Wide Web, <http://www.gwu.edu/~etl/deguide.html>. Ivyland, PA: Voicenet, 6.

based instructional programming, distance education relies on effective communication. While students require effective communication to learn the course material, appropriate feedback is necessary to develop and enhance distance education programs.¹¹¹ The development of distance education at Rowan University has already begun and a radio courses has been tested. According to Rowan's strategic plan, those programs will continue to expand in a variety of media and radio may have a major role to play in the future of the institution's distance education program.

While studies suggest radio's effectiveness, the focus of distance education during the past 20 years has shifted to newer media and technologies. Today video conferencing and internet instruction are often the first choices of institutions expanding their distance education programs. However, the convenience, low cost and effectiveness of radio can make it an effective choice for institutions with a radio station in place that are developing distance education programs.

Due to the infancy of many distance education programs, little research exists on marketing these programs. However, most institutions feel distance education has a major role to play in marketing a school and enhancing its image.¹¹² David Kaye of the North Carolina Public Schools suggests conducting surveys and interviews with existing students to determine their educational needs and their opinions about current distance education offerings.

¹¹¹ Jeffries, M. (1996). Research in distance education. World Wide Web: <http://www.ind.net/IPSE/fdhandbook/resrch.htm1>. Ivyland, PA: Voicenet, 4.

¹¹² Kaye, D.

This research, in addition to effective strategic planning, marketing and promotion will aid in the success of distance education courses. A successful distance education program provides more choices to existing students and attracts many students the institution could not otherwise teach. However, the program should be continually assessed in terms of course life-cycle, interest and demand.¹¹³

This study evaluated the distance education course on 89.7 WGLS at Rowan University with focus panels of its students. This research provides a foundation for Rowan to re-evaluate, expand and successfully market their distance education program.

¹¹³ Kaye.

Chapter Three

Data Needed

How does distance education via radio affect Rowan University student perceptions of college image? To answer this question, this study focused on attitudes. Students were questioned about their attitudes concerning distance education and what advantages radio distance education offers a college student.

Students were then asked if these advantages of distance education have any impact on the image of Rowan University. These attitudes will provide the information necessary to determine if distance education via radio has any effect on "college image."

Data Sources

The study focused on traditional and non-traditional students at Rowan University. It was assumed that these two group would have different perceptions about the advantages of distance education and the image of the institution. Students who participated in *The Growth and Development of Jazz* were also included in the study for their experience with radio distance education.

Research Method

The author conducted four homogeneous focus groups of eight Rowan University students. The first group included traditional students who had completed the WGLS

radio course. The second group included traditional students who had not enrolled in the radio course. The third group consisted of non-traditional students who had completed the radio course. The fourth group included non-traditional students who had not enrolled in the radio course.

Participants were asked to provide uncoached factors which contribute to the image of Rowan University. These "image factors" were then rank ordered by the participants. Participants were then asked to provide advantages for distance education courses. These advantages were also rank ordered by the participants.

Students were then asked if they would not enroll for a course at Rowan University if they could not take it at a distance. Then students were asked if people they knew personally would not enroll for a course if it was not offered at a distance.

Students were then asked what types of courses would be effective at a distance. These included courses required for a major, major-related course, general education required courses and free electives. The students were then asked if they would be effective if offered on the radio station.

Students then determined if specific courses would be effective at a distance. These included English Literature, Chemistry, Psychology, College Composition, Calculus, Voice and Articulation, U.S. History, Political Science and Music Appreciation. Students were then asked if the same courses would be effective if offered on the radio station.

Students were asked if distance education would enhance the image of Rowan University. Then they were asked specifically if radio courses would enhance the

university's image. Finally students were asked if they, and those they know personally, would not enroll for a course if it was not available on the radio.

After the focus panels, students were given a written survey and asked to rank a coached set of criteria for the advantages of distance education: cost, convenience, strength of professors, academic image and safety. Next the students were asked to rank a coached set of criteria for the advantages of radio distance education: convenience, improved access to education, saves times for teachers and students, safety and the cost effectiveness of radio. Finally the students ranked four distance education media including television or video, computers or the internet, radio or audio and mail.

Sample Size and Selection

The sample for this study was composed of four non-scientific panels of eight Rowan University students. Two homogeneous groups of traditional students were questioned, as well as two homogeneous groups of non-traditional students. Each of these two groups were further split into students who had completed the jazz course offered on WGSL and those who had not enrolled for the course.. Traditional and non-traditional were both represented because the author hypothesized that both groups would hold unique perceptions of distance education and college image. Students were selected from the Rowan University School of Communication.

Collection

Participants were asked to rank order the various criteria and their opinions about

Rowan University's image, distance education and distance education via radio. These responses were collected by two recorders present at each focus panel and hand delivered to the author. The focus panels were also tape recorded to verify expand upon the responses collected. Additional information about group behaviors observed by the author who acted as the facilitator in each focus panel.

Analysis

Results from each focus group were compared. The results from the groups of traditional students were crossed with those of the non-traditional students. The responses of those students who participated in the radio distance education course at Rowan College were crossed with the responses of those who had not.

The uncoached responses from all of the groups were studied to reveal distance education and image responses which were not included in the author's hypothesis. Finally, participants' coached and uncoached responses were compared to reveal what attitudes students hold about distance education before they are fully aware of its applications.

Chapter Four

This study was designed to determine if distance education courses on 89.7 WGLS-FM at Rowan University fulfill the goals of the college mission and enhance the image of the institution. Four focus groups of Rowan students were conducted to discover attitudes concerning Rowan's image, distance education, radio as a vehicle for distance education and the effects of distance education on college image.

The first group consisted of eight traditional students who had taken the *Growth and Development of Jazz* on WGLS, and the second consisted of eight traditional who had not taken the course. The third group contained eight non-traditional student who had taken the course, and the fourth consisted of eight non-traditional students who had not.

These focus panels provided several major findings. 75% of the students felt convenience was the most important advantage of distance education and 93.7% of the students felt convenience enhances Rowan University's image. Students felt that major required and related courses could not be effective at a distance, but general education and free elective courses could be effective. The particular courses students agreed would be most effective at a distance were Music Appreciation, History and Psychology. Most students felt Music Appreciation would be effective on radio as well; however, most students also felt that History and Psychology would be less effective if offered via radio than through other distance education channels such as video or the internet.

Another major finding was that 65.6% of the students felt distance education courses would enhance Rowan University's image, but only 53.1% believed radio

distance education courses would enhance image. When asked which medium was most attractive for distance education courses, 75% of the traditional students cited the internet or computers. However, 43% of the non-traditional believed the internet or computers was most effective while 56.2% believed television or video was most effective.

The groups were first asked what factor contributed most to the image of Rowan University. 50% of traditional students felt the donation from Henry Rowan and the development of the new engineering school was the most visible image booster. One traditional student commented, "When people ask me where I go to school and I say Rowan, they say, 'Oh yeah, isn't that the school that got the big donation?'"

Other responses from traditional students included safety (18.75%), the reputation of the education and communication programs (18.75%), academics (12.5%) and athletics (6.25%). One traditional student said, "I think that college athletics is big for enhancing image."

Non-traditional students were evenly split among four factors which they felt contributed most to Rowan's image: Henry Rowan's gift and the developing engineering school, a strong communication program, the fact the Rowan is a state school with reasonable tuition and the strength of the university's professors. A non-traditional student said, "I came to Rowan simply because the communication program has a good reputation."

The students who had not taken the jazz course on WGLS were also evenly split among these four factors. However, 62.5% of the students who had taken the jazz course felt that Henry Rowan's gift and the developing engineering school contributed most to

the university's image. One non-traditional student in the radio class commented, "Now that we are most important images are Henry Rowan and the engineering school."

**Most significant advantages of distance education programs
according to Rowan students**

	Traditional students with the radio course	Traditional students without the radio course	Non-traditional students with the radio course	Non-traditional students without the radio course
Convenience	6 / 75%	6 / 75%	5 / 58%	7 / 87.5%
Work at your own pace	1 / 12.5%	0	3 / 37.5%	0
Hot topic in society	0	2 / 25%	0	0

Students were then asked what advantages they associated with distance education. 75% of the students felt the convenience of taking a course at a distance, such as "learning in the comfort of your home," and "working at your own pace" at a time most convenient, was the greatest advantage of distance education. A non-traditional student commented, "I like the idea because you can relax at home and learn at the same time."

Some students felt this was a disadvantage. One traditional student said, "I think it would be looked upon favorably by incoming students, but to their parents who are mostly financing the education, they may look down upon it because it is not a traditional method of learning."

Another traditional student commented, "Taking distance education courses may promote a lazy attitude. College should promote discipline and attendance. Having a

college degree suggests you are someone who attended classes. That looks good to businesses."

68.75% of students who had taken the radio jazz class felt convenience was the greatest advantage of distance education, while 81.25% of those students who had not taken the course ranked convenience as the greatest advantage. One traditional student not in the radio course said, "Students are lazy, so distance education would benefit them." A non-traditional student commented, "If you can't make it to campus, you can still get the information and not miss a lecture."

Other students found the greatest advantage of distance education was the ability to work at your own pace (12.5%) and its impact on university image because it is a hot topic in society (6.25%). One traditional student felt the novelty of distance education was an advantage and said, "Having distance education programs would show that Rowan is not afraid of change and new technology. It shows diversity."

Do convenient courses enhance Rowan University's image?

	Yes	No
Traditional students with the radio course	8 / 100%	0
Traditional students without the radio course	8 / 100%	0
Non-traditional students with the radio course	7 / 87.5%	1 / 12.5%
Non-traditional students without the radio course	7 / 87.5%	1 / 12.5%

Because convenience was cited by most focus groups as an advantage of distance education, the students were then asked if more convenient courses at Rowan University enhanced the image of the institution. 93.7% of the students felt convenience does enhance university image, 100% of traditional students and 87.5% of non-traditional students. One non traditional student said, "Distance education courses, like telecourses, give you a lot more information than just one talking head. They often have experts in the field who have talked all over the country. I think also if you can get a degree quickly, like an accelerated program through distance education, *that* would enhance image."

Students were then asked if a course were not available to them at a distance, would they not enroll for that reason. Results showed that 40.6% of the students felt they would not enroll, 43% of non-traditional students and 37.5% of traditional students. However, 71.8% of the students felt that people they knew personally would not enroll for a course if it could not be taken at a distance, 75% traditional and 68.7% non-traditional students. 87.5% of students who had taken the jazz class on WGLS felt that people they knew personally would not enroll for a course if it was not available at a distance, and 56.2% of those students who had not taken the radio course agreed.

One non-traditional student commented, "My sister-in-law works and has kids, and if she could take courses at a distance and finish a degree she would in a second." One traditional student in the radio class said, "I think some people would take the radio class as an easy way to get out of going to class."

The groups were then asked what kinds of courses would be attractive at a distance. 65.6% felt that free elective courses would best be suited for distance education.

81.2% of students with the radio course agreed and 50% of students without the radio course agreed. 37.5% of the student felt General Education required courses would be effective at a distance; however, all of these students were traditional students with 75% of them in agreement. 6.2% of students felt major required courses would be effective at a distance and no students felt major related courses would be effective.

Students who felt these courses would be effective at a distance

	Traditional students with the radio course	Traditional students without the radio course	Non-traditional students with the radio course	Non-traditional students without the radio course
Major required	1 / 12.5%	1 / 12.5%	0	0
General Education required	8 / 100%	4 / 50%	0	0
Major related	0	0	0	0
Free electives	8 / 100%	4 / 50%	5 / 62.5%	4 / 50%

One traditional student in the radio class commented about the types of courses for distance education, "General information classes, where basically you're just reading material out of a textbook and being tested on things that don't require interaction or feedback will work." One non-traditional student in the radio class said, "Major-related courses important to your major need interaction between student and professor, plus the interaction between students."

Students were then asked which specific types of courses were conducive to distance education, regardless of the medium used. Music Appreciation courses were the

most popular with 84.3% of students in agreement. 81.2% of traditional and 87.5% of non-traditional students felt music courses could be taught at a distance. All of the students who had taken the WGLS jazz course felt these courses were effective at a distance and 68.7% of those without the radio course agreed.

The study revealed that 65.6% of the students felt that history and psychology courses would be effective at a distance. 53.1% of the students felt political science classes would be effective. 40.6% of the students felt College Composition and English Literature could be taught effectively at a distance.

Types of courses Rowan students felt would be effective at a distance and via radio

	Percent of students who thought the course would be effective at a distance	Percent of students who thought the course would be effective via radio
English Literature	40.6%	21.8%
Chemistry	6.2%	0
Psychology	65.6%	21.8%
College Composition	40.6%	3.1%
Calculus	18.7%	0
Voice and Articulation	15.6%	21.8%
U.S. History	65.5%	28.1%
Political Science	53.1%	15.6%
Music Appreciation	84.3%	84.3%

The most popular possible distance education courses among traditional students were Music Appreciation (81.2%), History (75%), Psychology (75%) and Political

Science (56.2%). One traditional student said, "English could work if there was some kind of interaction built in to the distance education."

The most popular possible distance education courses among non-traditional students were Music Appreciation (87.5%), English Literature (56.2%), Psychology (56.2%) and History (56.2%). One non-traditional student said, "Some courses like psychology and history don't require as much interaction. They could work at a distance."

The most popular possible distance education courses among those students who had taken the jazz class on WGLS were Music Appreciation (100%), College Composition (50%) and History (50%). The most popular possible distance education courses among the students who had not take the jazz course on WGLS were Music Appreciation (68.7%), History (65.6%) and Psychology (65.6%).

Students were then asked whether the same courses would be effective if offered via radio. Music Appreciation maintained the exact same percentages with 84.2% of the students in agreement of its conduciveness to distance education. Each of the other courses mentioned show extreme drops in the students' perception of the effectiveness of the course when offered on the radio. U.S. History dropped from 65.6% when offered at a distance to 28.1% when offered via radio. Psychology dropped from 65.6% when offered at a distance to 21.8% when offered via radio. English Literature dropped from 40.6% to 21.8% and Political Science dropped from 53.1% to 15.6%.

One traditional student in the radio class said, "I would not want to take any class offered on radio, I don't have the attention span for it." Another traditional student commented, "Radio for an English course wouldn't work if you had to sit and listen to it

on the radio because it would be gone too fast." One non-traditional student in the radio class said, "Listening to the show is actually pretty boring. Something needs to be done to make it more interesting. I'm a visual person, so the radio doesn't work well for me, especially when the guy's voice is so hard to understand."

Finally students were asked if distance education would ultimately enhance the image of the university. 65.6% of the students thought so, with 75% of the traditional and 56.2% of the non-traditional student in agreement. 62.5% of the students in the radio class felt distance education would enhance Rowan's image, while 68.6% of those without the radio course felt image would be enhanced.

One traditional student said, "Distance education enhances reputation. It would be a big factor for non-traditional students and commuters." Another traditional student disagreed, "Distance education is not that important. There are too many other factors that people would mention first in talking about Rowan's reputation. It's only valuable to someone already looking into distance education programs."

A non-traditional student had the following comment, "I don't think that offering distance education is going to have a strong impact on image, regardless of my opinions about it." Another non-traditional student said, "I think that I would be more inclined to choose a school that made education as easy as possible for me."

Does offering distance education courses enhance Rowan University's image?

	Yes, offering distance education courses enhances Rowan's image	Yes, offering distance education courses via radio enhances Rowan's image
Traditional students with the radio course	5 / 62.5%	4 / 50%
Traditional students without the radio course	7 / 87.5%	4 / 50%
Non-traditional students with the radio course	5 / 62.5%	5 / 62.5%
Non-traditional students without the radio course	4 / 50%	4 / 50%

The students were then asked if distance education specifically via radio would enhance Rowan's image. 53.1% of the students thought so, with 50% of the traditional students and 56.2% of the non-traditional students in agreement. 56.2% of the students in the radio class felt the courses could enhance Rowan's image and 50% of those not in the course agreed.

One traditional student in the radio class said, "Choice is good, but how many freshmen are really coming in and saying, 'Wow, they have radio courses.' They are not thinking about radio courses, they are thinking about partying." Another traditional student not in the radio class said, "It would promote image if it was promoted more effectively to students."

One non-traditional student, who had not taken the WGLS course, commented about radio distance education, "I think that radio will enhance image because a lot of people outside the college community hear the radio station. If they hear courses on the

station it will give a positive message to the listener, like the college is doing something for the community." Another non-traditional student in the radio class said, "As they are right now, the radio course is pretty ineffective. I think they might enhance image if you could take courses at a distance another way, like on video or computer."

Upon completion of the focus group, students were given surveys. They were asked to rank order the author's criteria for what comprises college image: cost, convenience, strength of professors, academic image and safety. 43% of the students felt cost was the most important factor affecting image and 31.2% of the students felt convenience was the most important factor. 50% of traditional students cited cost as the most important factor, while 56% of non-traditional students cited convenience as the most important factor affecting image.

Students were then asked to rank order the author's criteria for the advantages of radio distance education: convenience, improved access to education, saves time for teachers and students, safety and the cost effectiveness of radio. 68.75% of the students cited convenience as the most important advantage of distance education, with 68.75% of both traditional and non-traditional students in agreement.

Finally, students were asked to rank order four methods of providing distance education: internet or computer, television or video, radio or audio and mail. 75% of the traditional students felt the internet and computers were the most effective medium for distance education. 43% of non-traditional students felt the internet and computers were most effective, while 56.2% of non-traditional students preferred television or video.

Chapter Five

The purpose of this study was to determine what effect radio distance education has on the image of Rowan University. The institution offers *The Growth and Development of Jazz*, a music appreciation course, on its campus radio station, 89.7 WGLS-FM. Four focus groups of Rowan students were conducted to obtain opinions about university image, distance education, radio as a medium for distance education and its effects on the image of the institution. The four homogenous groups included traditional and non-traditional students and student who had taken the radio course on WGLS and those who had not.

The results of these panels provided several major findings. Henry Rowan's \$100 million gift and the new engineering school were cited as the factors contributing most to Rowan University's image. Convenience was cited as the greatest advantage of distance education and most students felt that more convenient courses would enhance the institution's image. Nearly 65% of the students felt distance education courses could enhance Rowan University's image.

Most students felt that if a course was not offered at a distance they would still enroll for it. However, many students thought that students they knew personally may not enroll if a course was not offered at a distance. The types of courses which were most attractive to students were free electives and general education courses. Students felt those courses required for or related to one's major needed interaction which would not be effective at a distance.

Specific courses which were attractive to students at a distance were Music Appreciation, Psychology and History. While most students felt Music Appreciation would be effective on WGLS, most students agreed that few other courses would be effective with an audio-only presentation. Traditional students favored computers and the internet as a delivery mode for distance education, while non-traditional students were more comfortable with television or video.

The focus groups felt that distance education could have an impact on the image of Rowan University. Many students felt that distance education was a hot topic and Rowan could position itself as a "cutting edge" institution if more of these programs were developed. Most students felt the convenience of distance education programs would have a positive impact on Rowan's image. However, traditional and non-traditional students have distinctly different opinions about the effectiveness of distance education and its benefits to students.

Conclusions

When asked what contributed most to the Rowan University's image, half of the traditional students cited Henry Rowan's financial gift and the new engineering school. Non-traditional students were split among several factors including convenience, academic image and the strength of the institution's professors. This may be related to a student's reason for attending a particular college. Traditional students are more apt to travel around the country to attend a well-known institution and therefore prestige plays a major role in their perception of image.

Non-traditional students are often settled into jobs, families and homes with no plans of moving. With their busy schedules, these students may choose schools based on convenience and specific programs. This might make distance education programs more attractive and beneficial to non-traditional students with heavy restrictions on their time. However, several traditional students commented in the focus groups that the convenience of the jazz course on WGLS provided an "easy 'A' class," which may undermine the purpose of distance education.

Each traditional student in the focus groups felt that convenient courses would enhance Rowan University's image. However, only 87.5% of the non-traditional students agreed. Nearly 13% of the non-traditional students felt convenient courses had no effect at all on the institution's image. This was an unexpected and unexplainable finding, considering many non-traditional students cited convenience as a major factor contributing to Rowan's image.

A strength of distance education is its convenience, which could enhance Rowan University's image. While 75% of the students felt that convenience was distance education's strongest attribute, the students in the jazz class on WGLS were less inclined to agree. Because of the course's general lack of convenience, students in the course complained of missing broadcasts, which were aired only once a week and were not available on tape to listen to at a later time.

The students were required to meet once a week to hear jazz concerts but the lecture material was not reinforced in class. This resulted in a lack of interaction between students and the instructor concerning the lecture material, a major complaint of most

students enrolled in the jazz class on WGLS.

Although there are over 250 students enrolled in the jazz course on WGLS, if a course was not available at a distance or on the radio station, most students would enrol for it anyway. However, 71% of the students felt those students they knew personally may not enroll in a course if it was not offered at a distance. This is explained by the "rose-colored telescope effect," people's tendency to view benefits as they apply to others but not to themselves. Students can see how distance education can benefit others but do not think it would benefit them personally.

Rowan students in the focus groups felt the benefits of distance education were restricted to specific types of courses. Students felt free electives and general education courses would be attractive at a distance. However, major required and related courses were not attractive to students when offered at a distance. Many students felt that courses important to their major required an interaction between student and instructor that could not be achieved at a distance. This stems from a common misconception among students in the focus groups that distance education lacks any interaction between students and teachers. Therefore, many students view distance education as a vehicle for courses which require little interaction. Students would also consider distance education for courses which are not important to their major or to them personally.

When students were asked which particular courses would be most attractive at a distance, most students agreed that Music Appreciation would be effective. The courses that required the least amount of interaction followed, such as History, Psychology and Political Science. While these courses could certainly incorporate a great deal of

interaction, it is author's opinion that these "introductory" courses at Rowan University are lecture based, which would make them attractive to students studying at a distance.

When asked whether the same courses would be attractive if offered on WGLS, students felt that only Music Appreciation would be effective. Less than a quarter of the students felt that History, Psychology and Political Science would be attractive if offered via radio. While the audio component of a Music Appreciation course like *The Growth and Development of Jazz* makes it conducive to radio, many students feel an audio-only course is less effective than a course with visual stimuli.

Several students enrolled in the jazz course on WGLS said they had trouble paying attention to the radio for two hours at a time. Others felt the radio lectures were boring. This may be related to the visual nature of our society. People are accustomed to highly visual media such as television and the internet, which we often consider more modern and effective technologies. Radio is perceived by many young people as an antiquated medium, devoid of any pictures. While research states that audio instruction is effective for many types of courses, many students feel they need visual stimulation in most courses to learn.

When students were asked if distance education would ultimately enhance the image of Rowan University, 68% of those without the radio course felt it would. 62% of the students in the jazz course on WGLS agreed. This difference may be due to the lack of structure in Rowan's radio course. Many students felt the class was an "easy 'A' course." Other students commented that they never listened to the broadcasts and still passed. Through these experiences students develop a negative perceptions of radio

distance education.

When students were given coached criteria for the factors which contribute to the image of Rowan University, 50% of the traditional students ranked cost highest and 56% of non-traditional students ranked convenience highest. Traditional students are obviously concerned more with the cost of their education probably because they have more choices than non-traditional students. Non-traditional students are generally working and often supporting families, so they actively seek the most convenient way to get an education within the confines of their busy schedules.

Students were also asked to rank four methods of providing distance education including the internet or computer, television or video, radio or audio and mail. Results showed that three out of four traditional students preferred computers or the internet for distance education. However, less than half of the non-traditional students agreed and two out of three felt television or video was more attractive. It seems the younger traditional students are more familiar with the internet, while older non-traditional students are more comfortable with older, familiar media such as television or video.

While research has proved its effectiveness, Rowan University students do not feel radio is the most effective medium for distance education. Radio is an old medium which is often overshadowed by newer and more visual technology such as television, video, computers and the internet. Many students feel a newer technology must be a more effective technology.

Casual use of radio might also tend to decrease its credibility in an educational forum. We rarely concentrate on radio broadcasts but generally tune them in to hear

music, which is often only "background noise" while performing other tasks. Several students commented on the difficulty of concentrating on a radio broadcast for two hours and others found the jazz lectures on WGLS boring.

A general lack of structure in the WGLS jazz course may be to blame as well. Students receive a book and attend classes throughout the semester, but students are presented with jazz concerts during class and the course material is generally not covered. Many students have discovered that the radio broadcasts are not an integral part of the course and stop listening to them early in the semester.

Recommendations

Since many students feel that radio is an ineffective medium, Rowan University's distance education program should expand to include other media. Traditional students seem to prefer computer and internet based distance education, while non-traditional students are more comfortable with television or video. Rowan must target its distance education programs to each audience before it decides which medium will be most effective.

Traditional students in the focus groups generally felt that Henry Rowan's gift and the university's prestige were the most important factors contributing to Rowan's image. Distance education programs would help Rowan University communicate more effectively with traditional students if the institution positioned itself as a "distance education leader" in the Delaware Valley. A "cutting edge" image could further Rowan's prestige among traditional students and help make the institution a more attractive choice.

To further enhance this image, Rowan should provide distance education to traditional students through computers or the internet. Most traditional students in the focus groups felt these newer technologies were most effective for distance education. One traditional student said, "distance education programs show that Rowan is not afraid of change and new technology." These students want to feel the college they attend is in step with the current trends in communication and education. Distance education via computer or the internet would further promote this image.

Non-traditional students in the focus groups cited convenience, strong professors and strong programs as the most important factors affecting Rowan's image. The university could better communicate with these students if it stressed the benefits of distance education to older, working students. Distance education provides great convenience to the student with little extra time for school. Through networks, distance education programs can also provide the student with lectures from experts around the country.

While 43% of the non-traditional students in the focus groups felt computers were the best medium for distance education, 56% preferred television or video. Rowan's distance education programs should provide these students with a choice of various media. While many of these students are active on the internet and computer literate, most feel more comfortable with more the more traditional vehicles for distance education: television and video.

Rowan's distance education program must be structured to provide convenience and interaction. Many students feel the current course on WGLS lacks both of these

important attributes. Since the program is only broadcast on Sunday evenings, the course should be available several times a week to meet a variety of student schedules. Cassette tapes of each lecture should also be available in the campus library so they can be easily accessed if a lecture is missed.

Each distance education course must have some interaction between the student and the instructor. Weekly office and telephone hours should be scheduled to answer any questions students may have about the course material. A professor's e-mail address can also be helpful to students with questions. A weekly class should also be scheduled to discuss the course material and answer any further questions. While these classes do not have to be mandatory, they can be an invaluable resource for the distance education student. If these practices were in place at Rowan University, many students enrolled in the jazz course may have different perceptions of the interaction in a distance education course.

Students in the focus groups preferred free electives or general education courses over major courses at a distance. Rowan's distance education program should concentrate on those lecture-based courses which require less interaction; however, strong interaction in each course should be in place. While continuing with Music Appreciation courses like *The Growth and Development of Jazz*, Rowan's distance education program should expand to include more choices such as History, Psychology, English Literature and Political Science.

Recommended further studies

To further develop a strong distance education program at Rowan University, the institution must study the opinions of students concerning distance education through other media, including television, video and the internet.

The study could also be expanded to include different sized institutions in other areas of the country. Student opinions about distance education may also differ in urban or rural institutions.

A study of different audiences is also extremely important to the future of distance education programs. This study should be expanded to include the opinions of high school seniors selecting colleges and potential non-traditional students who would like to return to school, but do not have the time. A new study should attempt to discover these students' attitudes about distance education and what medium would be most effective to provide it.

Evaluation

While a strong distance education program can help Rowan University market itself more effectively to students, it is also an important step in reaching the goals of the university plan. The Rowan University Plan calls for the development of a learning environment, which brings together faculty, students, staff and administration in an integrated learning experience that celebrates the achievements of every member. Distance education will play a major role in bringing together all of these members of the university community and interaction will be a key to its success.

The Rowan University Plan also calls for the university community to have access to new technologies. Through a strong distance education program students can hear lectures and interact with educators from across the country. The program will also bring computer and internet education, television and video education and radio education to a whole new group of students.

The University College, which caters to non-traditional commuter students, is also an integral part of the Rowan five-year plan. Distance education is one of the most effective ways to educate these students and this study provides insights about their opinions concerning distance education.

A distance education program will continue to gain importance at Rowan University as the five-year plan comes to fruition. This study can act as a guide for expanding the current distance education courses at Rowan into a strong distance education program. This research gives Rowan University a foundation for developing additional distance education courses designed for the different needs of both traditional and non-traditional students. A distance education program will also reach potentially untapped students who could not attend Rowan University in any other fashion.