

research in brief

Audio Cassette Learning

The University of Wisconsin-Extension uses audio cassettes in Extension course learning packages for practicing pharmacists in that state, as well as many other states and Canada. Along with the cassettes, which comprise the lecture part of the package, are printed lecture guides and printed lecture notes. Each package also contains a multiple-choice final examination, which may be completed and returned for grading. So far, 15 different courses are offered.

In this study, DeMuth tried to find out how the enrolled pharmacists felt about this means of teaching/learning, and especially about the audio cassette as a primary lecture method.

Seven-hundred pharmacists who'd completed 10 different courses were queried. Results of the survey showed they felt these courses were valuable and practical learning experiences. The audio cassette format was equally acceptable to all. The printed lecture guide and notes were seen as adequate. Examinations were deemed fair and representative of the material studied. Overall, most would recommend the program to their colleagues.

The pharmacist respondents liked the audio tapes because they were of good quality, tape players were easily available, and the tapes were appropriate for those with minimal study time.

DeMuth makes the important point that audio cassettes could be useful in other professional training programs. But there are undoubtedly many other possible applications. An audio tape, prepared by a county home economist, could be a good program for members of county home economics clubs. 4-H program tapes could be prepared for use in local club meetings. Specialists could prepare tapes for agent training and updating.

We might conclude that high cost, "gee-whiz" communications methods—such as color videotapes—may not be what Extension clients really demand. Here, an old method, and one we've tended to put on the shelf, is carrying useful information to the benefit of all.

"Audio Cassettes as a Means of Professional Continuing Education for Pharmacists." James E. DeMuth. *Adult Education*, XXIX (No. 4, 1979), 242-51.

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