

Research Briefs

KEY FINDINGS

- JagTV is a project that is welcomed by different segments of the community including parents and educators.
- Segments which featured services available to the community (i.e. library card, financial aid) were seen as especially informative and helpful.

IMPLICATIONS

For Practice:

- Future installments should include segments concerning amenities available to the general community, admissions processes (i.e. application, testing, financial aid, etc.), and fields of study available at STC.

For Policy:

- JagTV should be widely distributed throughout the community.
- JagTV should be seen as an important way for different STC entities to communicate with the community.

For Research:

- Future focus groups should be conducted to see how well STC is doing in making JagTV available to the community and how it is being received on a long term basis.



JagTV Study

As stated in its mission statement, South Texas College's Office of Public Relations and Marketing (STC-OPRM) supports the overall college mission through different promotional and informational pieces. JagTV was developed as a vehicle to help in meeting this objective. The aim of this study was to gauge various community members' opinions and reactions to JagTV, to determine what changes could be incorporated into JagTV segments, and also to seek feedback and recommendations on directions for future video segments. This study showed that, overall, community members found JagTV to be informative and engaging. However, certain recommendations for improvement and directions for future segments were offered.

Background

Among the departmental goals of STC-OPRM are to "promote the college and higher education to the Rio Grande Valley in order to recruit new students and keep the community informed." In addition, a section of its Detailed Assessment Report for 2008-2009 lists several objectives, including promoting the STC image, services, and programs through the use of video. To meet these objectives and goals the STC-OPRM has developed JagTV.

JagTV are informative videos meant to be distributed to several community groups on a monthly basis. Other colleges, such as Lansing Community College and Houston Community College, also produce television and video segments, but theirs differ from JagTV in that they run different segments and productions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through local public broadcasting channels.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to gauge responses and gather opinion of the initial JagTV video production. Information gathered as part of this research study will be used by the STC-OPRM to promote JagTV and develop future JagTV segments.

Methodology

A qualitative study was conducted to gain insight into this subject. Focus groups which consisted of various community members, such as parents of high school students, high school staff, and high school teachers were organized. A total of three focus groups were conducted at a local high school located within the area serviced by South Texas College (STC): Two with a mixture of parents and paraprofessional staff (n=17), and one with teachers (n=6).

At the beginning of each focus group the purpose behind the video and the focus groups were explained to participants. The

JagTV video, which consisted of several segments, was then shown. Transcripts, qualitative memos, notes, and other data were inputted into NVivo8 software. Data was then coded in order to find common themes and ideas.

Research Questions

The researchers sought to discover participants' opinions about the initial JagTV video and to elicit recommendations for future segments.

Key Findings

Coding suggested that there is a high level of interest in programming such as JagTV. The video seemed to hold the attention of all focus group participants and all of them expressed interest in seeing future segments and having their children/students see them as well.

Parents & Paraprofessionals

The groups that seemed most excited about this particular endeavor were made up of parents. They found the video to be

“very informational” and gave several examples of how the information presented could be used to assist them and their children. For example, one parent stated that her son had decided to go into culinary studies after graduating from high school, but until now she was unaware that STC offered a Culinary Studies program. After watching the cooking segment she was excited to learn that STC was an option available to her son.

Parents and paraprofessionals also agreed that the segment “College Services: Library Community Card” was particularly useful. They were unaware that this service was open to the community. They felt that this amenity would be useful to their families as a whole. One parent pointed-out that this service would allow her daughter not only to use the library, but “to experience what college might be like.”

Parents and paraprofessionals both seemed to think that the segment “College Services: Financial Aid” was informative, but could be improved. They felt that it could have provided more detailed information about how to go through the financial aid process.

Other aspects that the parents and paraprofessionals enjoyed included the diversity of presenters and the local community appeal of the various segments. They also felt that students would enjoy the “fast-paced” and “crazy” style of the video.

Teachers

The focus group that consisted of teachers had an overall positive reaction to the JagTV video. The majority agreed that while the video was not geared towards them, since it was “obviously produced for a much younger audience,” it still held their interest and they found the information to be useful — they all agreed that the information presented would benefit students and parents as well. For example, study participants stated the information about the library card could be utilized both to help students with their academic endeavors and better prepare them for entry into post-secondary education.

All the teachers that participated in the focus group felt that JagTV would be a good tool for them to utilize in their classrooms. It was suggested that the information on the videos could help answer questions about college to which they might not have the answers. Examples cited were the meningitis scare, other ways of paying for college, and different studying techniques.

Implications for Further Research

Future Segments

All groups agreed that the video segments informed them about different amenities offered by STC of which they were previously unaware. They stated that they would like to be presented with more segments that tell them about services and programs offered by STC that are available to the entire community.

Introducing students and parents to different fields of study offered by STC was also suggested. Tying information segments, such as “Cooking with Chef Paul” and “Fashion: Killer Looks”, to programs such as culinary studies and chemistry, seemed subtle but an effective way of doing this.

There was also a very strong interest in having future programs cater to the Spanish-speaking population of the area.

Other Recommendations

It is apparent that production and dissemination of JagTV to the community at large could be instrumental in helping STC-OPRM meet various outcomes and objectives outlined in their Detailed Assessment Report. For example objective/outcome 11 “continue developing, maintaining social media” could be met if video segments were posted on various social networking outlets, including YouTube, Myspace, and Facebook.

The STC-OPRM may also consider utilizing ideas currently used by Lansing Community College Television. This includes using a survey to have the community vote on what segments they would like to see, as well as utilizing community volunteers to work on various segments. Participants indicated that they would like for JagTV to be made available to them through various media outlets, such as educational public access channel 17, and in classrooms at various schools.