Audience feedback tested

(Continued from page 1)

assist them in a program of setting educational goals. A series of meetings with invited citizens (other area citizens had invited interested townpeople), Sheridan conducted meetings using his audience feedback equipment. The questions, he explained to The Tech, were drawn from three sources: the experimenters themselves, community leaders, and the responses of the audience participants. The system, he pointed out, is useful in developing questions.

Electronic audience feedback, Sheridan argued, "seems to be a good way to deal with a larger group," while ensuring anonymity and encouraging participation. The "object" category, in particular, Sheridan noted, was useful since it enabled the experimenters to draw out the views of the audience and form more meaningful questions and enabled the participants to "criticize the procedure." He admitted that "at first people are reluctant to use the 'object' category," but added that they quickly learn to take advantage of it.

Sheridan foresees a number of possible uses for audience feedback techniques in improving communication at large meetings. He pointed out that it is easily adaptable to meetings between two or more groups in different locations: such an arrangement, he explained, might be useful where it is inconvenient or difficult to bring divergent groups together. Instead, it would be possible to "let people go where they feel comfortable."

Coupled with either broadcast or cable television, audience feedback systems would permit more direct participation in a TV program, particularly those using a panel format. Sheridan also noted that the system has many other commercial applications, providing more immediate feedback to teachers from their students. It could also be used an aid in the design process, where the ranking of alternatives is a problem. The problems in the full, Sheridan emphasized repeatedly, are not with the hardware; rather the difficulties lie in the area of developing the procedures for using available technology. At present, he noted that there is not accepted objective procedure to "compare values of different persons or groups on a common scale." Further, Sheridan admitted that there are a number of difficult ethical questions involved. The technology already exists, he noted, to "keep track of who each vote came from." Without some process of certification, the participants have no guarantee of their anonymity besides the word of those who operate the equipment.

Discover oil . . . at the same time discover the possibilities for your career in the oil industry with Standard Oil Company of Indiana. We've been a leader since our company's product was transportation fuel. Discover for yourself how much more we do . . . and when you fit in.

Presently we have positions available for MBA's to work as Project Analysts for the Planning and Economics Department within our International Division, Undergraduate degrees should be in chemistry, engineering, finance, math or economics.

Discover the opportunities with Standard Oil Company . . . by talking to our campus recruiter on November 4, 1971 . . . Contact your Placement Office or write: Employment Coordinator, Standard Oil Company (Indiana), 500 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611.