

## **AUDIO-VISUALS: FROM AB'S TO PH.D.'S**

*by Dorothy D. Duhon*

Distance is a strong determining factor in our part of the nation. It accounts for many of our problems—educational as well as economic and social. Isolation breeds unwillingness to change. Transportation difficulties and traditional thinking hinder school district reorganization. The result is inability to consolidate budget and planning, limitation of faculty and curriculum, and promotion of bare minimum standards for entire districts. Foreign language programs have been one of the obvious victims of this process. Where the school is isolated and small, and the budget is meager, it is seldom possible to employ a foreign language teacher, much less to equip him with the tools and materials he needs.

However, as we all know, the potential for solutions to some of these problems is available, and among the most effective tools are audio-visuals of all types. In Colorado there is experimentation with a course designed to meet the foreign language needs of the so-called "necessarily small" school. The course is called "High School Foreign Language Instruction by the Media-Correspondence Method." Although only the first-year material has been developed, if it is as successful as the pilot has indicated, subsequent programs will be planned. Stressing an audio-lingual approach, and designed for schools without a prepared foreign language teacher, this group correspondence course uses video tape, audio tape, telectures (amplified telephone), and motion pictures.

Another creative effort to solve their problems has been undertaken on a small scale by a small mountain community which has been able to attract two capable foreign language teachers by having small carrels built into the language classrooms and by teaching each language at elementary and secondary levels, thus supplying a full teaching load. A bonus in the form of a shortwave radio transmitter and receiver ties the school to some of the other remote parts of the world, and uses the language skills of all who are able to talk to the distant speakers.

Still, most colleges continue to turn out teachers unprepared to discover and meet the varying needs of their pupils, teachers who do not know how to make full use of the excellent materials and media available, and who have not been trained through the advanced techniques developed in our field to evaluate their own performance in the

## **Audio Visuals**

classroom. Preparation programs which end with the language skills of the teacher and learner are incomplete and ignore the vital role of teacher attitude toward all their pupils, whether rural, urban, suburban, advantaged or disadvantaged. Every student teacher by graduation time should have experienced a variety of methods and techniques, discovering for himself that the promises of audio-visuals to enhance meaning, clarify concepts and attitudes, and provide invaluable vicarious experiences in the culture of the language being studied, are true. For this purpose, every teacher is entitled to the widest preservice experience possible with innovative uses of machines, materials, and methods of teaching.

In order to provide this kind of experience, and to prepare teachers who are creative and willing to experiment, the key person is the trainer of teachers. If the NDEA Institutes had begun, in 1959, with the preparation of these core personnel, as they finally came to do, we should now be generations of teachers ahead. Let us hope that the Education Professions Development Act (EPDA), will be funded sufficiently to continue the recent institutes for trainers of foreign language teachers, and that they will emphasize the need for change from the "business as usual" attitude that still characterizes some of our teacher preparation programs.

A hopeful sign in this direction is seen in an article by Dr. Don Davies, U. S. Associate Commissioner of Education, writing in the February 1969 issue of *AMERICAN EDUCATION*. He calls the EPDA an "Investment in the Future," and sees its resources as the means for making significant advances in attracting and holding talented people to staff our schools and colleges, and for providing an opportunity to rewrite what he terms "a long and sordid record of neglecting, abusing, and bungling the preparation of education-personnel." Much of our teacher preparation, he continues, is incompatible with the whole new concepts of teaching and learning developed through research and experimentation. Instead of a mass approach to education, we need to shift to an individualized approach; instead of focusing entirely on cognitive learning, we must respond to the requirements of individuals. More importantly, we must move to a multicultural and cosmopolitan view of education and of the world. We must move from requirements, courses, and credits to a system that values performance, and rewards a wide variety of skills and talents. "Until all school personnel understand that learning should be enjoyable instead of frustrating," he continues, "the educational climate is not likely to change." It is as someone has said recently, "Education is the only profession that fails its clients by design."

For several years, Colorado colleges have been making improve-

ments in their teacher preparation programs. The MLA Proficiency tests have been used as the basis for enrollment in teacher education programs, or for completion of such a program or for both. Others have used the resources of films, tapes, and the language laboratories to improve the teaching skills of the graduate students who serve as Teaching Assistants. Still others use multi-media courses as texts for their methodology courses. An NDEA Institute at one university used the video-tape analysis of micro-teaching units in foreign languages as developed by Dr. Politzer.

What is probably the newest use of multi-media in Colorado foreign language teacher preparation programs is that of the methods classes at Colorado State University at Fort Collins. There, the new Social Sciences Building houses a complex of eleven pie-shaped special electronic rooms, circling around a projection room that uses rear-screen projection. Movies, slides, and video-tapes can be shown without any projector noises, and with the house lights on. There are four large lecture rooms on one floor ⊕ and seven smaller rooms on another ⊗. The most outstanding feature of this facility is that in one of these rooms three individual cameras are permanently installed on the walls. Let me quote Dr. Arno Preller's description of his use of this facility:

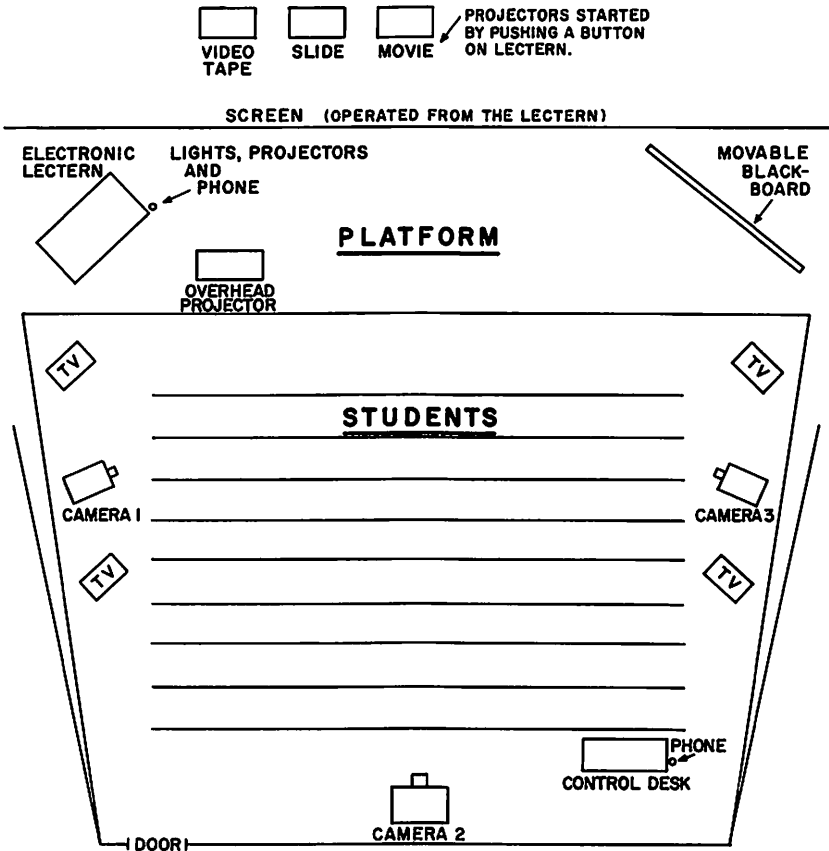
"While a student is demonstrating a teaching technique, the methods instructor is seated at the control desk, from which he can manipulate all three cameras. Special viewing screens installed in the control desk show him exactly what the camera sees. The cameras at the left and rear of the class (Cameras 1 and 2 on the Chart) are usually used alternately for pictures of the demonstrating student, while Camera number 3, (at the right of the class), is directed toward the class to take an occasional shot of their reactions. During the demonstration the student is free to move around the room, since the cameras are completely movable, and the lenses are capable of close-ups as well as of distance shots.

The actual processing of the video tape is done in another room, with which the instructor is in contact by special phones. The tapes are available for immediate play-backs, and can be seen on the four television sets installed in the room. The instructor usually dismisses the class to view the tape with the student who has just finished his demonstration. The tape can be played back as many times as he wishes to assimilate such problems in teaching."

The preparation of teachers, like that of other professional people, is a matter of lifelong, continuous learning. The preservice education,

**Audio Visuals**

**PROJECTION ROOM**



just as a doctor's internship, is simply preparation for learning the art of teaching. Through reading professional journals, talking shop with colleagues, attending conferences, workshops, institutes and summer sessions, serving on committees, and taking advantage of opportunities to travel and study abroad, the teacher keeps alert, progressive, and growing. But what keeps the teacher teaching?

"Those who are beginning to feel sanguine about the nation's teacher shortage will find little comfort in a comprehensive report on educational manpower soon to be published by the U. S. Office of Education," says John Chaffee, Jr., Public Information Director, USOE, writing in the February 1969 issue of AMERICAN EDUCATION. This manpower assessment indicates that education personnel training programs are not sufficient to meet current and future needs, and that the nation's most basic educational problem is the recruitment,

preparation, renewal, and retention of qualified personnel to staff its schools and colleges.

Among recruitment difficulties, Mr. Chaffee cites the competition with other segments of a service-oriented economy as one cause for a serious dropout situation under which nearly thirty percent of those trained to teach never do teach. Of those who enter the teaching profession, at least sixty percent leave teaching during the first five years. Although some of the frustrations teachers meet are inherent in an education career today, such as: rigid salary structures, no distinction between the duties of novice and experienced teachers, lack of opportunity for professional advancement as *teachers*, and little teacher involvement in basic policy decisions, the critical point of the assessment is that higher education has not made a substantial investment in teacher training. He weighs the cost of preparing teachers as compared to that of dentists and physicians, and the fact that the NDEA or EPDA institutes have so far affected only a minority of the teachers, and concludes: "What has been missing is a commitment to regular inservice training as part of a continuous process of professional growth and renewal."

Such a commitment to regular inservice training must be shared by schools and colleges alike, with communities, school systems, and colleges joining to plan and conduct programs. The shortage of teachers who will be needed to conduct programs can be met by imaginative use of electronic tools, through cooperation between schools and colleges.

Some commercial firms have already begun to enter teacher training, such as the English Language Services has done in one of the newer fields of language teaching — that of teaching English as a foreign language abroad, or of teaching English as a second language at home. They have developed an innovative method for meeting the urgent need for well-prepared teachers of English as a second or foreign language through a multi-media self-instructional teacher training program. This makes use of programmed workbooks, films, tapes, and supplementary learning aids in a fully-equipped fiberglass study carrel to teach English phonology and grammar, principles of language learning, classroom techniques, and general teaching methodology.

Another source for inservice programs was that of one developed in Colorado under a Title VI, NDEA grant from the U. S. Office of Education. Its primary aim was to introduce the teacher who had not yet attended an NDEA institute to the philosophy and practices of an audio-lingual approach to language teaching. Planned for independent group study, the guides on "Contemporary Methodology" (later prepared in three languages) are the core of a "package" which includes

## Audio Visuals

nineteen films on language teaching techniques and laboratory usage. This course, which consists of ten to twelve two-hour sessions, was implemented on a statewide basis with varying success.

That inservice training has not been seen as part of a continuous process of professional growth and renewal is shown in the piecemeal nature of the workshops, curriculum studies, and summer course offerings that have been available in the past. Many of these have been excellent in themselves, but, lacking adequate time and a definite sense of direction, as well as the participation in active planning and policy-making of the teachers concerned, the results have been uneven. Unfortunately, the same can be said for the impact of the NDEA and EPDA Institutes, which, although of high quality themselves, have often failed to produce change in participants for similar reasons.

Inservice training has been seen as an emergency need in schools which are waking up to the fact that non-speakers of English, such as the children of Navajo, Ute, and Spanish-speaking families, cannot be taught with the same procedures as can the native English speakers. In some of these programs, the use of films, filmstrips, audio-, and video-tapes have been effective in developing new cultural concepts, and techniques for teaching oral English. The results would be much better if the schools in need of such help could go to a college, and together with the teachers involved, develop a long-range plan for providing the necessary education in this vital field.

What's ahead? Will we ever get to the Ph.D.'s? There are encouraging signs. Some college language departments are studying their modes of operation, and showing interest in closer cooperation with school systems. Some schools are beginning to ask for programs that demand long-range planning. Teachers, who are becoming "activists," will have to assume some of the resulting responsibility for planning their own professional growth.

An encouraging sign of great potential for the development of far-reaching inservice programs is the fact that Colorado school districts in sparsely populated areas of the state have purchased video equipment that is identical to that of the State Department of Education, in its Instructional Materials Center. Dr. Eugene Waldmann, Director of the Center, sees great possibilities for education in this video network, and hopes to expand it even farther each year.

Distance, therefore, need be no handicap with this kind of vision. Audio-visual expertise is boundless in the services it can provide. What we need is imagination and courage to think beyond the restrictions that have been horizons in the past, and to make a commitment to teacher education such as we have not envisioned before.

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