

Textbook Correlated Audio-Visual Materials

By ALBERT J. ROSENBERG

There were educational and historical circumstances which led to the development of the educational film to accompany a textbook (the Text-Film). Selection of subject matter, function of educational and production personnel, and production procedures for current films are described. The Systems approach, an extension of the Text-Film concept, is cited.

THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT of a Text-Film is essentially an attempt to utilize the best features of motion-picture production and textbook publishing. According to the statistical information available, there are over one thousand "educational" motion pictures produced and released each year. These films are produced by business, industry and government, and some by Hollywood. A recent catalog lists over 18,000 titles in the educational field; actually, the vast majority of these are informational, public relations, promotional and advertising films; and not more than 20% are primarily educational in nature and content. This quantity of films places great responsibility upon producers and educators alike to make sure that standards of quality are maintained and certain educational criteria met.

Although many of the films used in the classroom have value in the educational process, most of them are not really directly correlated with text books. The McGraw-Hill Book Co. has developed and registered with the U.S. Patent Office the term "Text-Film" to signify any film which we produce that is so designed. The word evolved from conversations between several producers and McGraw-Hill in 1947 when we first started production. At that time it meant motion pictures only, but we have expanded that meaning over the years to include filmstrips. Text-Film has come to mean motion pictures or filmstrips directly correlated with a textbook for use in school, college, or other formal classroom situations.

History of Correlated Visual Materials

Educational motion pictures, although available in limited quantities before 1940, really began to be effectively utilized during World War II. The remarkable success of audio-visual materials in quickly and effectively training large numbers of military personnel and industrial workers gave the educational film its biggest boost. As a result of such utilization, there was a great deal of

publicity on what could be accomplished in education by use of visual materials. As some readers may remember, there were claims that films could teach anything to anybody — in no time at all. Still others thought that you could teach without teachers — even without textbooks.

This great interest in visual education, especially the idea that there would be no need for textbooks, made many publishers wonder what, if any, their place should be in this new medium of education. One group of seven publishers banded together to find out, and spent many thousands of dollars to finance a research program on teaching films. The research indicated that this should not be a field for publishers; consequently, none of them really started producing and distributing educational motion pictures and filmstrips until fairly recently.

McGraw-Hill, however, felt it should do its own research, and in 1945 began to explore the possibility of correlating films and filmstrips with some of the firm's outstanding textbooks. A year and a half was spent researching what had been done in visual education prior to the War and examining the best features of the military and civilian war training programs. As a result of this research, we decided to develop packages of films and filmstrips for the classroom, correlated with outstanding textbooks for the students, and with guidance material for the instructors. We felt that this approach would help sell not fewer but many, many more textbooks.

Establishing the Requirements

In determining the need for correlated visual materials for a specific book, questionnaires are sent to the educators. Originally, such questions were asked as, "Which parts of the course are most difficult to teach?" "What do you want your students to remember when the course is completed?" "What are your primary objectives in teaching this program?" Some very interesting answers were received about the concepts the educators wanted to teach, the objectives of the course, etc., but never any hint about the concepts that are difficult to teach. So, the questionnaire was changed

and now the users of the book are asked to list the parts of the course which the students find difficult to understand. Apparently, there are many concepts the students find difficult to understand but nothing the instructor finds difficult to teach. From such questionnaires, we usually find five to ten areas that cover the primary objectives of the program, points the instructor wants the student to remember, and concepts difficult for the student to understand.

These are our guide lines. If we can produce materials for areas difficult to understand, tied in with a textbook already widely used, we will be giving the teacher a package of materials which will help to simplify the program and make it more enlightening to the students.

Research

Three important characteristics determine the value of an educational film: content, quality and variety. The first step, therefore, is research to pick good quality books on the high school or college level. From our adoption lists, we send questionnaires to the book users, asking which concepts are the most difficult for the students, should these be produced as films or filmstrips, and would the educators use these audio-visual materials if they were produced. We also ask for suggestions or comments on the subject in general, and frequently list topics which have been proposed by other educators or the author of the book.

In the meantime, we are doing a thorough investigation. Is there anything available in this subject-matter area? Is anything new in production now? Are more materials needed? If so, what can we do to make our films better, more interesting, etc.? When all the answers are in, the Editorial Committee meets to discuss the project and to decide whether or not to proceed. If the decision is to go ahead, then the next step is production.

Choice of Producer and Subject-Matter Advisor

We wrestled for some time with the concept of producing our own films with our own production staff. However, like the Office of Education and certain branches of the military, we finally decided that it would be wisest to turn to the excellent commercial film producers around the country. We have found that this gives us great flexibility in that we can go to a producer who specializes in medical animation, to another in human relations, to a third involved in child

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psychology and the handling of children, to a fourth for technical animation. In other words, in each case we are able to select the producer that we feel can do the best job on a particular subject, and we get the highest quality for the money expended. This also gives us a freshness of approach in each film which might be difficult to achieve if all our product came from one producer.

Therefore, based on our research, the subjects are chosen and a decision is reached on what is to be included in each film. This is sent to the producer who then submits an estimate of production cost. We analyze these costs in connection with the potential market, and commission the producer to develop these materials to our specifications.

In almost every case, the author of the book, who is usually a well-known educator, acts as technical advisor.

Production

The producer's researcher and script-writer prepare outlines of the material in the textbook, the author reviews it for technical accuracy, and our people review it for overall potential cinematic treatment. The next step is to prepare complete shooting scripts, and we go through the same procedure as with the outlines. Then the film is shot, or the artwork and animation are prepared and shot, and a rough cut is submitted to the same group of people for comment and suggestions. At the rough-cut stage

another technical advisor is frequently brought in to get an outside reaction. Changes are not called for unless it is shown that they are needed to improve the picture.

The responsibility for the production is in the hands of the producer, the educational content in the hands of the author, and the general treatment and scheduling are the responsibility of our personnel. This seemingly complicated series of steps may sound like a lot of work, but we insist that the content of each film be as appropriate for the educational situation as we can make it. We believe that the finished film should be both educational and interesting; it should be a tool in the hands of the teacher to improve the teaching technique and to make the subject more alive to the student. It should create excitement in the individual's mind, so that it will make him think and want to discuss it, and it should be well done so that the student does not lose interest. When an educational film contains good material, when it is interesting and stimulating, it will be used by the educator.

To summarize, the steps we use may be outlined as follows: (1) pick a widely used textbook in an area where audio-visual materials are needed; (2) work with the author to incorporate his ideas and suggestions with those of our own production and research staffs; (3) en-

gage the talents and creative efforts of the most suitable producer we can find to produce the film.

Future of the Concept

Today there is a new name being applied to this educational package: it is called the "Systems approach." The correlated Text-Film program which we started in 1947 is essentially the same thing as the Systems approach — a combination of materials: motion pictures and/or filmstrips with a textbook to provide a teacher with high-quality, integrated teaching materials to help the teacher and the student gain a new insight into some concepts.

With the "Systems approach," however, other materials are now included in the audio-visual package. One example of this is the audio-visual-lingual package with coordinated films, filmstrips, tapes, and textbooks. This is an example where the films and tapes came first and the textbook followed. It is not really important which comes first as long as the solution to the task is an integrated "system."

This complete package appears to be the plan of the future. It conceivably may also contain many other items, such as laboratory equipment, models, charts, slides, and teaching machines. However, it appears quite likely that for many years the heart of any educational program will be the textbook and the correlated filmstrips and films.

Aspects and Applications of the Single-Concept Film

By STEVE KNUDSEN

The production of single-concept films, films characterized by their shortness, is increasing. The scope of five educational projects utilizing the single-concept film are reviewed. These films are described with reference to subject matter, intended audience and photographic techniques.

FROM TIME TO TIME educational films have been produced which are characterized chiefly by their very shortness. These have been known by various names such as "filmettes," and in a special use as "loop" films. Presently the term "single-concept film" is in use.

The number of single-concept films recently produced or currently in production is many times larger than it was

just a few years ago, and this production is increasing. Why do we have this increase? What is the rationale behind these projects? What are the trends with respect to decisions such as sound vs. silent releases, with respect to the use of animation, live photography, photomicrography, time-lapse and high-speed; with respect to international use, grade level, and an orientation towards rapidly changing curricula?

This paper reviews five projects of production of series of single-concept films. The purpose is to isolate some items from each which may give a better understanding of the issues raised above.

Teaching Cancer

Twenty-eight films that qualify as single-concept films were made to aid in teaching the subject of cancer in the medical schools. The project was supported by the American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute. This is the oldest of the projects reviewed and enough time has elapsed since its completion to allow for some evaluation.

The general rationale for this series is well stated by Dr. David S. Ruhe, then serving as Director, Medical Audio Visual Institute.¹ It is quite similar to the rationale of the other projects and is worth repeating: "The conventional medical films produced for county society and hospital staff programs are designed to stand by themselves: They are rounded and reasonably complete messages from an individual author, or from technical advisors working with a sponsor

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