

Teaching With "Segmented Loops"— Integrating Film Into Printed Materials and Lectures

By CHARLES PALMER

A COMMON SCHOOLROOM phrase, "Today we'll see a film," points to a basic flaw in the use of film for teaching and learning, i.e., film and print come to the learners as separate media.

An effective salesman — and a good teacher is a salesman — knows that his presentation must have unity. If he uses

two or three appeals, one medium must lead the way, with the others complementing the overall presentation of material.

In my proposed mixed-media format, if most of a lesson can be presented verbally, the lecture would be the dominant medium, with short bits of film interpolated when the lecturer's words need visualized expansion. When the

visual point has been made, perhaps in a few seconds, the lecturer would return to his text. This could be done in the same manner in which lecturers frequently utilize the visualizing power of a blackboard or transparencies on an overhead projector. Why not use the film cartridge in the same way as a contributory function — particularly animated film with its power of using analogy to clarify the abstract principles and concepts which are so often beyond the power of words. The teacher could let the sound-record narration play or personalize the interpolation with his own voice.*

Those who argue against this proposal assert that the main difficulty is that, to show a film, the classroom must be darkened and a skilled operator must be brought in to handle the projector, and that since most available teaching film is in the form of 10- to 30-minute subjects, there are few appropriate silent loops or cartridge loops available. The facts are, however, that over 7,000 subjects are now available in super-8 cartridges and easy-to-operate projectors that can be used in average room light have been developed.

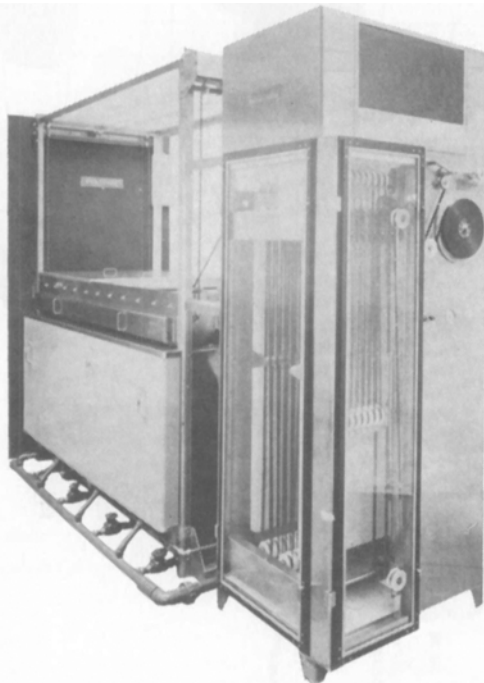
School methods will change only glacially. However, educational television is more susceptible to change, being itself a comparatively new medium. The "segmented loop" format can be used immediately to improve the lectures in ETV. There are many other vital areas as well where, with the application of new equipment, segmented loops can be effectively used.

"Interpolated" Film Use in Correspondence Courses

Teaching and training in a home-study course are achieved through the medium of the printed word, since printed words generally do most of the job adequately, and paper and ink are the least expensive of all the media.

However, many home-study courses are being revised to supplement the printed word with audio-visual presentation. Since we are starting fresh, we ought to start right: i.e., motion-picture film should be resorted to only when its peculiar powers are needed. At the places in the instruction material where the subject matter needs to be carried beyond the point where the printed word's effectiveness runs off the end, and where a full understanding of the subject matter

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A contribution submitted on July 7, 1969, by Charles Palmer, Parthenon Pictures, 2625 Temple St., Hollywood, CA 90026.

* Palmer, Charles A., "The silent/sound film for teaching and training," *Jour. SMPTE*, 74: 749, Sept. 1965.

can benefit by use of the film medium, film can be introduced in order to: (1) show and dramatize relationships; (2) show progressions and processes; (3) give vicarious experiences; (4) demonstrate skills and actions which require motion; and, perhaps most important, (5) give comprehensible, concrete expression to abstract ideas, concepts and basic principles.

Here is one way these theories may be implemented: Take a printed copy of each lesson in the course, stick a pin in each "spot" where it is desirable to go beyond the teaching limit of print (maybe the "pins" are computer profiles of past student grades) and then consider these "spots" as nominations for single-concept film "interpolations." The result will be a unique kind of film format.

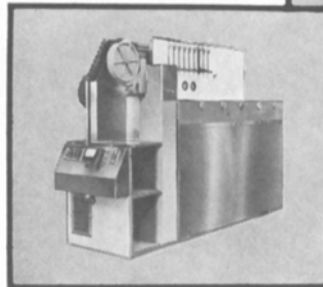
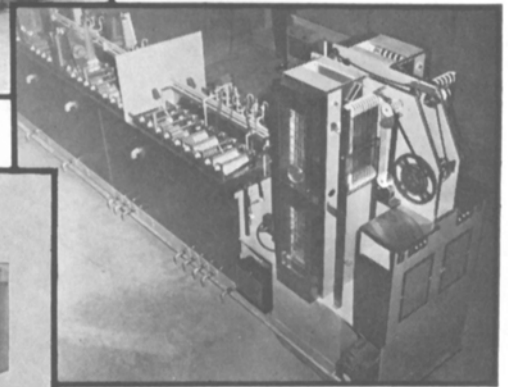
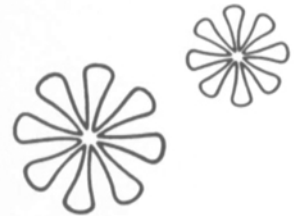
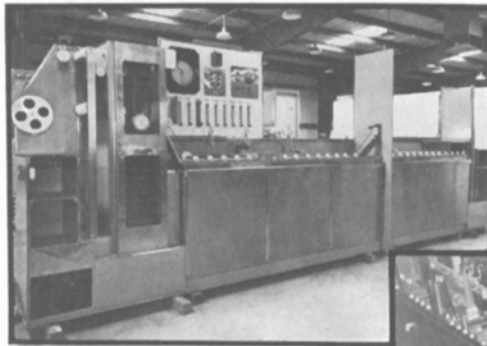
A feel of film, whether conventional or a short loop, has always been considered as a single subject, beginning at the head and ending at the tail. There is no reason to accept this as absolute. What I am proposing is what we might call a "segmented loop." This reel, usually short and suited to cartridge or cassette projectors, would include several "chunks" of film, separated by strips of white leader. The printed lesson pamphlets would say "See Figure 1" . . . "See Figure 2," and so on, and each "chunk" would show only such concentrated film footage as needed to carry the point-at-issue beyond the limitations of printed words, to full clarity.

In some courses, a few single-subject loops (non-segmented) would be desirable; for instance, they might deal with the broad philosophy or significance of the subject or they might illustrate certain fundamentals which would apply to all the lessons.

Not incidentally, the commercial application of these techniques with students will be made possible by the new generation of low-cost 8mm loop and cassette "personal" sound-film display devices which will be ready before the new software can be developed.

The fundamental job is to knock out of one's mind the traditional assumption that a movie has to be an entity to be used only as a primary medium. It must be appreciated that motion-picture film segments can be used as "illustrations" and "interpolations," subordinate to and serving the primary medium of printed and spoken words.

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