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Administering the Audio-Visual Program in the Elementary School

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ADMINISTERING THE AUDIO-VISUAL PROGRAM
IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A Research Paper
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Arthur Samuel Martin

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THIS PAPER IS APPROVED AS MEETING
THE PLAN 2 REQUIREMENT FOR THE
COMPLETION OF A RESEARCH PAPER.

M. Doyle Koontz
FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study is to assemble information that will help an elementary school principal, or a person in a leadership position, administer a program for effective audio-visual instruction in the elementary school. This paper will attempt to show how proper supervision can lay a foundation for intelligent audio-visual instruction.

Limitations of the study. The establishment of principles for improving audio-visual instruction through group participation is the purpose of this study. No attempt will be made to include information on physical facilities or technical and mechanical techniques involved in operating and using audio-visual aids.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Audio aids. Audio aid denotes materials and devices presented to students through the sense of hearing only. Disk records and recorded tapes and the machines on which they are presented are examples of audio materials and devices (15:2).

Visual aids. The term visual aid denotes materials that students comprehend through a sense of vision, and the devices by which they are exhibited (15:2). A filmstrip, a model, a map, a bulletin board display, and a flat picture are examples of visual aids.

Audio-visual aids. In a narrow sense this term refers to, "Materials presented through the senses of sight and sound simultaneously, and to devices used for presenting these" (15:2). "Audio and visual have come to include all activities concerned with types of teaching aids that are not exclusively verbal" (2:283). Audio-visual materials do not depend primarily on the printed word but appeal to one or more of the senses (10:20).

Building coordinator. A member of the school faculty usually appointed by the principal or selected by the faculty to act as a resource person for audio-visual instruction is commonly known as a building coordinator. The coordinator works as a fellow teacher rather than as a supervisor to carry out the program and aid teachers in any way possible to improve the learning environment.

In-service education. This term is defined as, "Activities on the part of employed teachers that contribute to their professional growth and qualifications" (12:550).

CHAPTER II

PROMOTING THE ORGANIZATION

Administrators and teachers are constantly appraising their techniques and methods so schools can meet their obligations in this rapidly advancing age. With a constantly changing curriculum to meet these demands of society, more responsibility is assumed by the schools. The school curriculum is expanding because of the greater knowledge a pupil must acquire to find a place in a highly technical society (28:12).

Tremendous changes are taking place in education. New technology has made possible mass instruction through aids like television and films coexistent with individualized instruction through the process of language laboratories and teaching machines. Television can bring into the classroom the best instruction from master teachers or let the pupil view world-wide events first-hand. In 1961, an airplane especially equipped as an air borne television station flew over the state of Indiana. Educational broadcasts from the flying television station went out over an area of hundreds of square miles to school children listening below (22:330). In contrast to media of such latitude, a tape recorder with several outlets for individual listening can enable pupils to receive direction and instruction to fit their needs.

More complex language laboratories, each consisting of a booth, headset, microphone, recording facilities, and a monitoring setup for the teacher, provide students with an individualized type of foreign language instruction (10:21).

The use of audio-visual materials is increasing so rapidly that elementary school principals must give serious consideration to the audio-visual program. Teachers and principals need to be aware of all these learning devices and how to use them wisely (10:20). The school must choose those educational experiences which are most important and desirable to present to the pupil (19:36).

I. FUNCTIONS OF THE PROGRAM

"Most teachers and administrators have come to appreciate the fundamental role that audio-visual materials can play in good instruction" (23:78). Audio-visual instruction is a method which serves and implements the curriculum (4:19). The total curriculum can be improved and given more meaning to the pupil by the use of this tool (28:8). Some of the important ways in which a properly used audio-visual program of instruction can affect the learning process are listed below:

1. It contributes to factual learning as an additional reference, when used wisely.
2. Audio-visual instruction stimulates understanding.

3. The retention of learning is increased because audio-visual appeals to both senses of the child (19:48).
4. The attitudes of children are influenced.
5. Audio-visual aids motivate and interest the child.
6. Audio-visual materials also develop efficient skills and habits.
7. The use of these materials will increase voluntary reading (17:14).

From these functions, it can be seen that the application of audio-visual aids to the learning environment is quite important.

II. THE PRINCIPAL AND THE AUDIO-VISUAL PROGRAM

In any school the principal exerts leadership in organizing and guiding his school on any major development which takes place. The way he views audio-visual instruction will have an affect on how well these aids are used in the elementary classrooms (5:17). The principal must examine the role of audio-visual instruction as a means of interesting the child and effectively instructing him toward the goals of education. A good program will give the child socially desirable information of great use to him (28:15).

The principal's attitude toward the use of audio-visual materials has a large part in improving the program (16:90). He must first establish a purpose of the program and then organize responsibilities so that the program operates smoothly. The climate must be such that teachers

can exercise individual initiative and judgment (6:19). The leader must be aware of technological advances in the field and be willing to experiment. He must be concerned about teacher preparation both when he hires them for his school and while they are teaching. Leadership is the key to a good program (16:90-91).

The principal can enlarge and improve upon the present program by identifying and studying the basic tasks to be accomplished (15:3). Motivation for creativity and experimentation in using audio-visual instructional aids should come from him (6:19). The principal or another person will coordinate plans, needs, and interests of many teachers. He may delegate much of this work to a building coordinator (28:514). The principal and coordinator will be leaders in establishing a proper environment conducive to audio-visual instruction by working with teachers to organize and coordinate these aspects of the program:

1. Provide a thoroughly planned program.
2. Schedule and distribute equipment and materials for effective use.
3. Provide the most effective materials and devices for specific purposes through a system of evaluation and selection by the teachers.
4. Be willing to help teachers with problems (15:3).
5. Provide for teacher participation in training classes and other service programs for teaching techniques (28:510).

The principal or coordinator should know the sources of audio-visual instructional materials within a school building. The materials, equipment, and facilities for producing materials should be known to them by proper filing and cataloging as well as by observation and handling (3:86). The principal and coordinator will need to be acquainted with sources within the school system, especially if the system is large and contains a central service and materials department. The principal or coordinator can become informed of this by scanning the catalogs that are issued by the center and by visiting the center and looking over the facilities. The principal interested in promoting audio-visual instruction will also know the community sources. Private organizations have films and speakers available that are free of commercial or promotional information. The audio-visual department often has lists of acceptable outside sources and resource people (3:86). Community institutions such as the public library are valuable sources (3:87). There are also books, pamphlets, bulletins, and journals published by state and national organizations that contain up-to-date information or list other sources (3:88).

Although the principal is the administrative head of the school instructional program, many phases of the program planning and operation are assumed by members of the faculty. The principal will have the responsibility of

getting teachers to recognize the program and act upon it. Leadership will give direction for cooperative planning and discussion by the whole staff (5:17). The principal considers the recommendations of committees formed to study methods of improving audio-visual instruction and then works with them to carry it out (9:81). The principal cannot merely state his desires and demand more of the teachers. The actual worth of any method of instruction depends on how the teacher adapts it to his teaching. When the whole faculty group takes part, the organization for instruction is much more effective and at a higher level than if the group were dictated to from the top (5:17). Attitudes of teachers toward their work has an effect on audio-visual instruction while success in the use of audio-visual aids will probably strengthen the teachers' attitude toward them. By knowing materials and methods each teacher uses best, the leader can suggest ways for the teacher to raise his standards (14:85).

III. COMMITTEE PLANNING

For a program to reach its maximum potential a plan must be carefully prepared and pursued. There are several principles that will serve as a guide in drawing up a plan. For audio-visual instruction the plan should be as simple and practical as possible. An effective plan fosters a program

that facilitates learning and fits into the regular services and routine of the organization. The plan must have wide scope to include instruction in all aspects of learning with maximum support of all teachers. Finally, these proposals have as their goal improved classroom instruction (13:294).

The most important step is to get the program under way. A good start is to get an audio-visual committee together. The size of the committee is determined by the number interested and the size of the school, with three to five members suggested as a practical number (13:293). An eighteen to twenty-four member faculty group is too large to handle the details involved in working out a plan. The members of the committee may be picked by the principal but it is held that voluntary participation is best (7:197). The committee, usually representing each grade level or department, should be comprised of teachers who are willing to work and who have a definite interest in educational improvement. The chairman is usually a person who possesses a knowledge of audio-visual instruction, possibly the building coordinator (13:293). Problems undertaken for solution need to be ones that teachers want solved. The principal guides the work of the individuals and the group to reach the established goals by suggesting activities to solve problems and meet the needs of the group (3:514).

An effective committee begins with a recognition on the part of members that some particular action is needed. Members must first become informed on the topic of audio-visual instruction (13:293). They may wish to find out how other schools have organized their program by visiting other buildings to examine the phases of organization being carried out there. A specialist or coordinator may be invited to speak to them about the subject. After acquainting themselves with the program, the committee can begin on a plan of action. Several sources have given suggestions as to what a plan might be.

An inventory of all audio-visual aids owned by the school is the first step in proceeding with the problem. The inventory, concerning quantity, location, and state of repair of each aid, can be evaluated to tell what materials are available and to whom. The projection skills of the teachers can be included in the inventory (3:510).

The committee, along with the principal or coordinator, can come together to discuss the results of the survey. By analyzing the weaknesses and strengths of the present program a plan to better utilize the present teaching talents can be drawn up. The committee has the responsibility for studying the program and recommending to the faculty ways of improving it. The committee will report their findings to the staff at general meetings where recommendations can be accepted (3:510). A sensible policy starts where the school organ-

ization is, not where the leader would wish it were. The committee should not move too fast but should try to generate added interest by showing new materials and ideas, and encouraging teachers to experiment. A policy can now be formulated regarding audio-visual instruction (13:295).

A policy serves as a process of establishing what is to be done, who is to do what, and how it is to be carried out. Teachers are responsible for formulating the policies, for although the principal has basic leadership, the committee is given authority to investigate and compose tentative policy, subject to approval by the faculty. The policy includes information on use and selection of materials and equipment, teacher improvement, distribution of aids, and other related subjects (28:522). Formation of policy is based on the findings of the committee. Some suggested guidelines of a policy are listed below:

1. Should projection equipment be used in a special room or room to room, or both?
2. Should the equipment be student operated, teacher operated, or both?
3. What materials should be purchased outright for the school and what should be borrowed from the audio-visual department?
4. How should the audio-visual aids be distributed for most effective use, and be available to everyone (9:83)?
5. How often should teachers meet to preview and select new materials?

6. How should materials be judged for selection?
7. How well should teachers become acquainted with the aid before using it in instruction (28:522)?
8. How much should teachers experiment?
9. What can be done about teachers who lack projection skills?
10. How much time and what facilities should be provided to produce aids?
11. What type of in-service education is needed (3:511)?
12. How can the program be evaluated?

Each person on the staff must understand the policies and the various aspects of the program. Once policies have been established they should be re-examined periodically and be revised if needed (28:512).

IV. SELECTION OF AIDS

An important function in the administration of materials is selection and purchase (28:498). It has been proven that teachers make the best choice in selecting textbooks; by the same token selection of audio-visual materials demands participation of teachers. Selection of aids is a joint responsibility of principal and teacher (24:200).

The expansion of the audio-visual field has resulted in a very complex and confusing assortment of equipment and products. A most important factor in utilizing aids is the skill and understanding which is applied when they are used

or purchased (11:142). The committee, along with individual teachers must use good judgment in selecting additional aids (26:73). Many times individual teachers will take the initiative and secure materials to help carry out their individual part but the teacher must have a knowledge of the learning needs in order to select materials that meet these needs (25:35). The principal, by sharing selection with those who are expected to use the aids, is using the most effective method of carrying out the program (26:73).

Criteria for selection of materials has been formulated by experts in the field. The criteria must be thought of in terms of student needs and development of concepts to meet those needs. The following is a suggested list of general principles to follow when purchasing aids or when selecting them for use:

1. Do the materials give a true picture of what they present? How old is the information? What is the quality of presentation (3:78)?
2. Do the aids contribute meaningful content to the topic under study? Is the information suited to the purposes of the study?
3. Is the material appropriate for the age, intelligence, and experience of the learner?
4. Is the physical condition and the technical quality satisfactory? Are the materials of substantial and lasting quality (3:80)?
5. Is there a guide giving a clear idea of how to use the material (3:82)?
6. Do the aids promote sound and critical thinking?

7. Does the aid improve human relations? Does it create an attitude to encourage understanding between people?
8. Is the material worth the time, expense, and effort involved?

Balance the selections to cover all areas of the curriculum, realizing that certain areas use more audio-visual aids than others. Balance the types of aids for a variety of learning experiences (26:29). Materials are selected for best use at each grade. Consideration of vertical grade level organization will prevent gaps and overlapping in the program (6:19).

The expense of equipment and materials is an important aspect when purchasing. All types of machines are not required for a balanced program. The program can run at a reasonable cost if proper care is exercised to provide for full utilization (5:55). Some materials, because of their complex nature, cannot be selected by school committees. The principal or coordinator should see that experienced persons help evaluate and select these more complicated aids. Demonstrations can then be set up for the final decision by the teaching staff (26:73). Improvements and new ideas are constantly being developed, yet teachers cannot overlook the very useful materials and methods presently in operation. These have been proven effective and cannot be cast aside. New ideas are accepted when they are proven practical and are fully developed (22:331).

V. PLACEMENT OF AIDS

Most schools have some audio-visual materials and equipment within reach. They are apt to be film projectors, record players, globes, maps, charts, or any number of other aids. In schools containing no organized program, materials are usually found being used in the classroom or stored away for infrequent use; sometimes even locked up preventing their use by teachers. Organization and management will make teachers more aware of these aids and their instructional value (9:78).

An important goal of the program is to provide needed materials at the right time (24:189). The easier materials can be located and used, the more time saved for teachers in using them (16:104). Teachers with a busy schedule do not have time to hunt down materials for classroom instruction. They will use them if and when they are easily accessible. Arrangements for preview and class showing must be made easily, with a minimum of effort. Good administrative practice will provide student assistants for these distribution jobs (23:80). Proper distribution, accurate cataloging and filing, and systematic scheduling will expedite their usefulness.

The question of where to place aids depends on several factors: the quantity, the frequency of use, the size and layout of the school, and the maintenance required (26:187).

The classroom is the ideal place for audio-visual materials to be put to work (8:204). When materials are of sufficient quantity and receive regular use, they should be distributed to each room. Such things as maps, radios, record players, and feltboards will have maximum value in the classroom (26:187). The principal or coordinator, and teachers should agree on approximate grade placement of certain materials to avoid exposing pupils to duplications in instruction (23:80). The classroom as a learning laboratory functions best when all audio-visual instruction takes place there. Group showing of films with other classes in special rooms is difficult to coordinate and is not usually desirable (28:520).

Every building needs a central collection of audio-visual materials to house items which can be shared and to avoid wasteful duplication of materials (1:49). Material in insufficient quantity for all rooms, too expensive for wide distribution, infrequently used, or presenting storage problems can be placed in the audio-visual center (27:487). Often the center may be combined into an instructional materials library containing all the items and services for teachers and students (1:50). The building center has space for storage of supplies and equipment. Space is provided for preview and examination of commercial materials and for production and construction of aids (8:216). School-owned materials indexed in a catalog by subject and title is necessary, also.

CHAPTER III

IN-SERVICE EDUCATION

The principal's main duty is to help teachers do a better job. Research has indicated that audio-visual materials contribute greatly to effective teaching only if they are used with care and planning. It has been found that a majority of teachers have not had specific training in how to use these aids. In-service training is a solution to this problem of keeping the profession abreast of new knowledge and methods (21:1).

Effective education has certain characteristics. The training starts where teachers are, by building upon this experience with practical suggestions for classroom situations (21:1). Needs of the teacher can be found by classroom visitations, general observations, meetings, questionnaires, and individual discussion. The training is planned in detail, with the cooperation of the teachers, to attain an effective and challenging program (20:50).

Some objectives of audio-visual in-service education are:

1. To enable the teachers to understand the principles underlying the use of these tools of instruction.
2. To help teachers understand the place of audio-visual instruction in the curriculum.
3. To familiarize teachers with the most effective techniques.

4. To help teachers develop criteria for evaluating their instruction.
5. To help teachers become familiar with all types of aids.
6. To see that the teacher is familiar with the services of the audio-visual center and the procedures for obtaining material from the center.
7. To help teachers know how these materials should be utilized in the classroom (18:317).
8. To help teachers become acquainted with various sources of materials.
9. To provide instruction in the operation of equipment (18:318).

What should a good in-service program include?

Surveys have found that most building services provide individual conferences with the building coordinator or principal, demonstrations, exhibits, informational bulletins, workshops, and grade level meetings (6:20).

Exhibits and displays in the building are a way of enlightening members of the staff to such things as catalogs, professional books, and new aids. Results of follow-up activities that may take the form of art work, written stories, or pupil-made aids are good objects to display (5:266).

Exhibits of commercially-made or teacher-made materials are always interesting (21:16). In this way the teacher is encouraged to prepare and present materials, when suitable ones are not available, by seeing how and what others have done. Teachers can be alert to new methods without investing

too much of their time (15:3). Exhibits should be changed often in order to provide more learning opportunities.

Another means of professional improvement is through faculty meetings and grade level meetings. Teacher meetings are the simplest to organize, but they need to be well planned and contain good content to stimulate interest and eliminate boredom. With the short time allotted, concentration is on a specific objective (8:94). A demonstration is an appropriate method of utilizing the time provided for meetings. A demonstration can show ways of using a specific type of equipment or material for achieving a given teaching purpose (21:8). The various resource people and the teachers who prepare and present programs at these meetings gain most from this in-service activity. Thus, the program should strive to obtain the talents and abilities of as many teachers as possible (21:15). Faculty meetings offer an opportunity to preview films and recordings. Previews of films and filmstrips are a relatively easy method of training.

Grade level meetings enable the members to be more selective in their interests (24:284). Grade level meetings, whether local or system wide in nature, have two approaches. Teachers of a common grade may overview new materials taught at the grade level or review a specific unit that is commonly taught, using films, maps, bulletin board displays, etc., to show effective use of audio-visual aids (20:51). Each group

of teachers on the same grade level works together on exchanging experiences and sharing ideas, materials, and devices (24:284).

A common way to raise the standards of instruction of teachers is through the experiences and knowledge gained in workshops. Workshops, being of a more functional nature than most formally organized classes, meet the needs of the teachers adequately by encouraging participation through discussions and production of materials (18:317). Workshops are organized to allow teachers to work actively on a specific problem (8:101). A building workshop is able to select and cover problems of local concern (26:169). Teachers learn first hand by operating machines, producing materials, selecting and evaluating materials. The groups are generally small and are provided with time for sufficient study and experience (18:317).

There are several other ways to offer audio-visual instruction to teachers. Bulletins are often put out by the audio-visual department. These bulletins offer information that describes new aids that are available, comment on in-service training opportunities, print articles that tell of successful techniques and activities carried out by other teachers, and give other related information (22:173). Various guides and catalogs helpfully list available materials by grouping them under suggested units or topics

of study or outline ways of utilization certain aids (22:174). A good professional library is necessary if teachers are to improve themselves professionally through individual study (20:266). Another way a principal or coordinator can serve is by meeting with the teacher individually to listen to their problems and to offer encouragement or suggestions (16:52). Participation in classroom activities by audio-visual resource people can do much to stimulate teacher creativity and experimentation (22:176). An outside source of training can be provided by college extension courses. Instructors from the college audio-visual departments offer a systematic background of knowledge especially valuable to those with little training in audio-visual methods (22:170). Teachers who are alert and eager to improve their work will be regularly involved in some aspect of a training program.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

An audio-visual program must be constantly and continuously evaluated. The evaluation is a process involving the principal, coordinator, and teachers (4:215). If audio-visual instruction is to make a major contribution to pupils' interests and desire for learning it must be appraised to determine the extent to which it is fulfilling its goals (4:216). Criteria is generally developed to measure the organization and administration and to help point toward future improvements and goals. Each principal and staff will develop criteria to fit the program. General criteria can first be formed and then enlarged to develop specific criteria to evaluate all phases of the program in terms of its objectives. Checklists are helpful in evaluating the program.

The administration of the audio-visual program is a complex problem. New methods and materials are being constantly integrated into the learning environment. The audio-visual administrator must give constant study and serious consideration to progressing toward meeting the needs of the pupil.

The principal often delegates some responsibilities to a building coordinator and voluntary teacher committees who will identify the basic tasks to be accomplished and

discover what understandings and skills will create a higher level of competence in audio-visual instruction for each teacher. Policies formulated will suggest activities to solve the problems and improve instruction.

The principal guides the work of individuals and the group to achieve their goals. The principal or coordinator plans and coordinates in-service education to keep the profession abreast of new knowledge and to release creative abilities. Thorough, well-planned and continuous education should prove profitable to every person on the school staff.

The principal can provide leadership in several ways. He can make teachers aware of the need for improved instruction and how they can acquire adequate knowledge and skills. He can allow teachers to have a voice in formulating a plan of action. The principal needs to constantly evaluate the program for ways of improving and revising audio-visual instruction.

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