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A Little Bit of first Grade

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A LITTLE BIT OF FIRST GRADE

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

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

by
Shirley M. Hayes
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the fall it is a common practice of many school districts to hold a "Back to School Night" for the parents of children at all levels of education. This orientation is usually held in conjunction with a Parent Teacher Association meeting. Each teacher welcomes their students' parents in an effort to better acquaint the parents with the school, the curriculum, and the teacher. During the meeting, an effort is made to inform parents of the school rules, practices and procedures that affect their children.

In the past, the time allowed has not been sufficient for an overview of instruction, materials, rules, practices, and procedures, and for answering questions. In order to make this meeting more satisfying for parents and teachers, new ways of disseminating information, in one or more of these areas, is needed.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The production of a sound filmstrip that will introduce parents to first grade work--methods and materials. This media of communication will clearly acquaint the parents with the program and provide the teacher with sufficient time for discussion

of school rules, practices, and procedures. Special attention will be given to beginnings of new work or concepts.

Importance of the problem. Parents are becoming more aware of the part a successful start in school plays in future school success of their children. They are watching with more interest the curriculum, methods, and materials used in our schools. This sound filmstrip will attempt to not only inform, but to relieve the anxieties held by many parents. This film will show more concisely and vividly the program and leave time for a more complete discussion of school rules, practices and procedures.

This time will be used not only to acquaint the teacher with the parents but also the parents with the teacher. If they feel their child's teacher is interested in and concerned with the learning problems of each child, it is hoped this understanding will enable the home and school to work to the benefit of each child.

Some school specialists will be introduced in this sound filmstrip to acquaint the parents with the duties of each. Therefore, the school specialists have not entered into the orientation program in a personal way. It is hoped through this introduction, parents will feel more free to call upon these people for help when needed.

It is a common practice in many school districts to give each teacher a period of forty to forty-five minutes to explain his program, methods and materials, school rules, practices and procedures, and to answer questions. This time period is not sufficient to cover all of these topics and consequently, the majority of time is spent on the program, methods, and materials.

Some school systems do publish an orientation pamphlet for parents of first grade children but many do not. Some individual teachers, the author included, have duplicated pamphlets for parents but it was felt the information was not as effective or as meaningful as oral and visual presentation.

The completed sound filmstrip could serve as an instructional material in education classes on the college level. It could be used as an aid in other school districts' orientation programs for parents as well as teachers.

II. POPULATION USED

This film was produced at Clark Elementary School in Issaquah, Washington. The children were in the writer's first grade class. This was one of three first grade rooms. The total enrollment of the school was approximately 575.

The school is located in the city limits and draws students from within the city as well as from approximately ten miles into the rural area. It draws from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Approximately two-thirds of the children are furnished transportation by the school district while the other one-third walk.

III. PROCEDURES AND LIMITATIONS

After securing permission to take pictures of the children at school activities during the school day, it was necessary to obtain the necessary equipment and write a script. Then, from the script, the slides were planned allowing flexibility to take advantage of any unexpected valuable experience that may be of interest to parents.

First grade children are flexible and cooperative. Filming began two weeks to a month after school began allowing sufficient time for the children to become accustomed to school and the teacher. The children were given an explanation of what was to be done and why. A filmstrip was shown to give the children a better understanding of the outcome. Filming was done periodically during the entire year. It was necessary to stage some beginning work since interruptions during the initial experience were not desirable.

After all the necessary scenes, titles and captions were photographed, the slides were retaken on a roll of film to form the filmstrip. A tape recording of the script was then made.

The proposed sound filmstrip will not attempt to cover every step or phase of work done in first grade nor will it cover school rules, practices, and procedures.

IV. EQUIPMENT USED

The equipment used in making this sound filmstrip was:

1. Konica 35 mm. camera
2. Tripod - Star D Continental
3. Argus light meter
4. Kodachrome II film
5. Slide sorter - model 305
6. Sawyer 500 R slide projector
7. Radiant Colormaster screen 40" x 40"
8. Honeywell Repronar
9. Tape-recorder
10. Sunset magnetic tape 600A
11. Filmstrip projector

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF THEORY AND RESEARCH

A survey of the current literature on parent-school orientation indicates that many school districts are conducting some kind of orientation program for parents. Superintendents, principals, and teachers are giving added attention to methods that will contribute eventually to parent education and increase parent support and participation.

As our society becomes more complex, the necessity for parent orientation becomes more apparent. Gordon McCloskey contends it is essential that school personnel recognize that honest effort to obtain public understanding and support are normal and essential aspects of operating any modern enterprise (17:14).

Our schools are maintained for the purpose of teaching children. Parents judge the adequacy of our schools mainly in terms of the achievements of their children. McCloskey comments on the need to inform parents by stating that if we want citizens to value education, then we must continuously show them of its worth. We should show them that pupils are accomplishing, succeeding, acquiring valued knowledge and skills. We can not expect people to support

existing school programs or want better ones without recognition of the values they receive (17:111).

Parent interest in school begins when their child enters school and is faced with new experiences and new problems. There is usually an intense desire to learn more about the child. Some cooperative relationships must be set up to bring together those who may be concerned in the education of little children (19:320).

Various educational writers have stressed the need for careful reorganization of our orientation program. This need is commented on by McCloskey. He states:

. . . that many of us in education have been remiss in recognizing and accepting the need for modernized communication with the public. Our sincere interest in getting on with the basic educational aspects of our work has led most of us to overlook or underestimate the need for public explanations (17:13).

McCloskey further contends that at this time when an adequate education is of unprecedented importance to individuals and to the future of our nation, honest and effective public communication designed to give the largest amount of understanding is a prime responsibility of educational leaders (17:25). Adequate effort to create public understanding of the value of education can yield great dividends. Insufficient or inept effort will retard essential development and make teaching needlessly difficult (17:16-17).

A review of the current trends in acquainting the parents with the school indicated that direct parent contact with the school and its program to be the most successful. W. G. Reeder believes that there is no more effective way of acquainting a community with the school than through visiting it (18:160).

Teachers and administrators have used various means of encouraging parents and other adults to visit schools. Open-house nights, room mothers' organizations, concerts, plays, athletic events, mothers' teas, and father-son banquets are a few examples. Large amounts of effort have been devoted to arrange means of enabling parents to see, hear, touch, and feel school, and to experience the rewards derived from association with other parents with similar interests. Direct experiences have a stronger impact on the senses and conveys more meaning than spoken or written words. A single visit to a classroom makes a stronger impression, creates more understanding, and develops more firm personal relationships than many spoken or written words (17:313).

Gordon McCloskey states that our overall goal is to " . . . create public understanding which will result in moral and financial support sufficient to provide high-quality education for the nation's children and youth" (17:29).

One method commonly used by school districts to orient the parents with the program is through the use of handbooks. A handbook is usually a manual or guide of carefully compiled and concise information. A handbook may or may not be used in conjunction with a "Back to School Night." It is a common practice in many school districts to give each teacher a period of forty to forty-five minutes to explain his program, methods and materials, school rules, practices and procedures, and to answer questions. The time allowed is not sufficient to do an adequate job.

Another approach to educating parents as to what happens to their children in school is through actual demonstrations by teachers with students. Some schools approach orientation through the use of parents as they become the pupils in an actual demonstration (20:259).

An interesting approach to orientation was found in Little Fort School, Waukegan, Illinois. The program was set up with a different open house night for each grade level from kindergarten through sixth. The program consisted of a panel presentation by the faculty on topics related to the grade level being discussed. A question and answer period followed, then a visit to the classroom, and ended with a social hour. Each program was tape-recorded. As new teachers entered the school system,

they could play the tapes and receive a preview of the objectives each grade level attempts to achieve during a year (13:40-41).

Programs which bring parents and citizens to the school, invitations which are genuine and specific, build citizen and parent understanding and appreciation of the schools. The writer believes that there is a need to explore new methods in presenting the school program to parents. The writer believes that in this exploration, audiovisual aids have a definite role. Jerrold Kemp substantiates the use of audiovisual aids in the following statements:

Effective communication can no longer be considered possible with words alone. The very nature of our language, coupled with the limited experiences of most people, often makes it difficult to convey ideas and information effectively without resources beyond words. Today, audiovisual expression is essential to clear, interesting, and purposive communications (14:3).

Gordon McCloskey further substantiates the use of audiovisual aids in parent orientation. "Photographs are unrivaled means of transmitting realism. They can accurately show viewers how real pupils do real work in real school situations" (17:163). Parent interest is high when visual materials are used. Viewers can interpret photographs with less effort and more accurately than words.

The writer contends that good teaching is pre-requisite to good public relations. No matter how skillfully a public relations program is planned and used, it cannot take the place of nor conceal the shortcomings of a poor school.

Additional references which incorporate audiovisual materials in the area of orientation point to the growing value and increased usage of this method of communication.

Davies, Llewella. 9 O'clock Scholar: An Educational Film Depicting the Major Activities During a Day in a First-Grade Classroom.

Koontz, Mary Jane. Getting Ready for Kindergarten: A Film Designed to be Shown at an Orientation Meeting for Parents of Kindergarten Children.

Liboky, John Bert. Off To A Good Start: An Educational Film Depicting the Orientation of Teachers.

Henry, Earl G., "Picture Your School," American School Board Journal, 134:34, June, 1957.
A series of colored 2 x 2 in. slides with tape recorded narration presented as the main feature of a Parent Night program to make parents aware of how much the school offered boys and girls.

CHAPTER III

THE SCENARIO: A LITTLE BIT OF FIRST GRADE

<u>Scene</u>	<u>Narration</u>
1. A Little Bit of First Grade	This is a thesis filmstrip presented to the Graduate Faculty of Central Washington State College.
2. Produced by Shirley M. Hayes	The sequences were filmed at Clark Elementary School in Issaquah, Washington.
3. Front of Clark Elementary School	This fall your child took a new step in his life. This will be a step toward new skills, understandings, and attitudes that will help build him into a responsible citizen. We hope he greets this challenge with anticipation and pleasure.
4. Children entering the room.	This filmstrip has been prepared for the parents. It has been designed to help you understand the program. The following is not an attempt to give a full course of study but covers only a few points which, at this time of year, are usually of interest to parents. All teaching aids are teacher made.
5. Children saluting the flag.	Each day is begun with the flag salute and the singing of America. We expand our concepts of patriotism

SceneNarration

- and democratic principles as they affect us as a family at school.
6. Group working with sets of pictures that may or may not rhyme.
- Since all children do not develop at the same rate nor have the same reading readiness needs, the teacher works with a small group of children. This permits the teacher to give more individual attention.
7. Child working in readiness workbook.
- The child must develop readiness which is the ability to hear, see and reproduce differences and likenesses in words. He must develop the ability to interpret a picture sequence in left to right order.
8. Caption - Concepts of Work.
- In order to help children understand that school is work and that children learn self-discipline in school, the following scenes are presented.
9. Children reading in Our Big Red Story Book.
- This leads into our scanning of actual words and sentences. Our Big Red Story Book follows in which we reinforce left to right and top to bottom sequence.
10. Children reading silently in a group.
- As the previously stated skills are thoroughly developed, the children are placed in groups of comparable achievement and guided reading is begun.

<u>Scene</u>	<u>Narration</u>
11. Children in reading group answering questions.	The children read silently and orally and always with a purpose.
12. Child reading independently.	Independent reading follows.
13. Group of children associating the color with the color name.	Most boys and girls come to first grade knowing their colors. The next step is to associate the color with the color name.
14. Group of children matching color names.	Then we match the color name itself.
15. Child coloring a picture which states the colors to be used.	And, we then remove the concrete and replace it with the abstract.
16. Group of children working with beginning sounds.	First grade children learn beginning, middle, and final consonant sounds. We see children associating a beginning sound with its abstract form and we used sight to help develop sound.
17. Group of children forming new words by changing the initial sound.	We also learn the speech sounds ch, sh, th, wh, and qu. Consonant blends and vowels are introduced. In this scene, the children are forming new words by changing the initial sound.
18. Children counting with counting rods.	In arithmetic, our first graders work from the concrete to the abstract. We count with actual objects.
19. Children counting with blocks and discs.	

SceneNarration

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| 20. Children working with sets. | A set is a group or collection of objects considered as a single entity. Here the concepts of more and less, equivalent sets, matching to determine the relation between sets are thoroughly examined. |
| 21. Children grouping numbers. | Abstract numbers are gradually worked in with the concrete examples. |
| 22. A child working combinations. | First grade children also learn addition and subtraction combinations through ten. |
| 23. Whole room activity--the clock. | Whole room activities are fun and stimulates healthy competition as shown here with individual clocks. |
| 24. Close-up of clock. | |
| 25. Group working with clocks. | This type of activity is used as a review after group work has been completed. |
| 26. Children at seats doing seatwork. | While the teacher reads with a group of children, the remaining must work independently. It is during this time that they do most of the work which they bring home. |
| 27. A child printing. | Most seatwork is based on arithmetic, phonics, and social studies. |

SceneNarration

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| 28. Children resting. | First grade children work hard and play hard. We find a short rest time after the noon recess very helpful. |
| 29. Caption - Enrichment Activities. | All of the following scenes show enjoyable activities which are necessary aids to reading readiness. |
| 30. Children sharing and telling. | Sharing is an important part of first grade. It encourages the children to express themselves freely about things really of interest to them. At the beginning of the year, we share almost daily. Later, we set aside periods for sharing. |
| 31. Sharing bird. | However, our schedule is flexible enough to take full advantage of special opportunities. |
| 32. Children enjoying a flannelboard story. | All children enjoy stories and it is important that first grade children be read to daily. |
| 33. Flannelboard Story-- children joining in. | Flannelboard stories are often short but are fun to repeat when the children can join in. |
| 34. Children enjoying films. | Films are used mainly in conjunction with social studies units and science, but a story is always enjoyed. |

SceneNarration

35. Children enjoying television.

We try to take advantage of our educational television station by viewing those programs geared to primary children.

36. Children on a field-trip.

Fieldtrips can reinforce work done in the classroom. A social studies unit covering community helpers will be more meaningful when supplemented by a trip to the post office, fire department, or police station. They give us an opportunity to observe seasonal changes. We can also enjoy cutting a Christmas tree or gathering materials for a room project.

37. Children painting.

Children enjoy expressing themselves through a variety of media. We see a group of children putting the finishing touches to a rhythm instrument interestingly made with light bulbs and paper mache'.

38. Children using rhythm instruments.

The children have a chance to experiment as well as to adhere to specific instructions, and still provide a form of emotional satisfaction as it is used in rhythm activities.

39. Children attending an assembly.

The children have opportunities to take part in programs as well as to be a part of an audience.

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40. Playground--free play.

Free play allows the children to choose activities and playmates as they wish within a framework of rules for fair play and safety.

41. Playground--fixed equipment.

Bars, balls, and jumpropes foster rhythm and coordination but it is not necessary to supply all the children with such equipment.

42. Playground--creative activities.

A little imagination and originality can make a walled camp with a few rocks, and gold from a few sparkling stones.

43. Children enjoying an organized game.

Participation by all is assured through teacher supervised organized games. Organized games stress sharing, courtesy, good sportsmanship, responsibility towards others, spirit of competition, and aids in the development of leadership qualities.

44. Caption - School Specialists.

The following scenes show some school specialists and services that further aid your child's development.

45. Music with the music specialist.

The children look forward to the weekly visit of our music specialist. The children learn to listen carefully to pitch and match tones, to make physical responses to rhythms, and

SceneNarration

to hear, remember, and reproduce tones and rhythmic patterns accurately.

46. Children listening to a record with the music specialist.

Guided listening to music heard on the piano, radio, or phonograph aids the child's listening abilities.

47. The school librarian reading to the children.

First grade children love stories and look eagerly toward their visits to the library.

48. Children checking out books from the library.

As first grade boys and girls begin to read independently, they are allowed to check books out from the library. You can see a sense of pride in accomplishment written on the faces of these children.

49. School nurse weighing a child.

The school nurse is on duty in our building periodically. She supervises the weighing, measuring, and visual checking of children. She conducts hearing tests and readies the children for immunizations. She conferences with each teacher concerning the physical growth and development of each child.

50. Speech specialist working with a child.

Our speech specialist works with children with slight speech problems as well as with those with severe speech

SceneNarration

problems. Some problems can be corrected in a short time period but more severe cases can not be put on a time schedule. Patterns firmly established are difficult to change.

51. Children eating together in the multipurpose room.

Eating together is fun and it should be. It is a time to enjoy our neighbors in a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere. But, table manners and rules of common courtesy must be adhered to.

52. Children boarding busses.

These children have shared with you some of our first grade activities. It is hoped that you and your school can make your child's school career a happy and successful one.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMARY

The writer planned and produced a sound filmstrip to orient parents to portions of the first grade program. Through the use of a filmstrip, with color and sound, the parents will see children in actual school situations. It introduces some concepts of work, enrichment activities, school specialists, and shows many teacher-made instructional materials.

The purpose of this sound filmstrip was not only to inform parents but to relieve the anxieties held by many parents. By condensing the time used in the discussion of the program, it will be possible to more carefully cover school rules, practices, and procedures. More time will also be available for the answering of questions and for parents and teacher to get acquainted.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The sound filmstrip, A LITTLE BIT OF FIRST GRADE, is a tool for showing parents portions of the first grade program, methods and materials. The sound filmstrip shows pupils and teacher in action and reduces the time spent in

discussion of routine topics during fall orientation. This allows time for discussion of school rules, practices, and procedures and for answering questions. The sound filmstrip shows many teacher-made instructional aids. It pays special attention to the beginnings of concepts and ideas as used by a first grade teacher.

Advisors and the writer jointly believe this sound filmstrip can have multiple uses and beneficial effects in parent-school relations. It can be used in the college classroom as well as in parent and teacher orientation in other school districts. It could serve as a public relations device through viewings to community organizations.

It is hoped that through better communication between parents and teachers, the home and school can work together to the benefit of each child.

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