

An Audio-Visual Center in a College of Liberal Arts

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Broadly speaking, a university has three major functions: research, teaching, and public service. Stating this another way, the functions of a university are to discover knowledge on the one hand, and to conserve, interpret and extend knowledge on the other.

In the teaching process — the conservation, interpretation and extension of knowledge — the library of books and the audio-visual materials center are important arms of a modern university. The book library is, of course, better known since its history goes back for centuries whereas the audio-visual center is only decades old. Library associations have developed standards of quantity and quality for the collection and circulation of books so that some measuring sticks can be applied to determine the adequacy of a library, or at least to compare it with others. Standard are only beginning to develop for collections of audio-visual materials, and the creation and growth of these university collections is uneven, some being large and some being mere token collections.

When a new aid to teaching becomes available to the university world, it is accepted only after long experimentation. The high esteem given to the printed word today is interesting when seen in historical perspective. Imagine being a professor at the University of Heidelberg (founded 1386) around the year 1500 when books printed with the new movable type began to appear in useful quantity. The university was already more than a century old and full of traditions about how professors should teach and how students should study and learn. The professor had his

handwritten manuscripts which he carefully guarded and the contents of which he read and explained to his students. But the use of Gutenberg's invention of movable type had been growing slowly and books printed with this type were appearing in ever increasing numbers. Perhaps books were getting so cheap that students were buying their own. This apparently easier access to knowledge through an increase in books must have been lauded by most persons with a concern for education, but one can also imagine that some professors looked at the inexpensively printed book with misgivings. Perhaps one professor asked another, "If every student can have his own book containing the lectures of this course and others, will these books not replace the professor?" His colleague might have replied with another observation, "If students can buy their own printed books, will they not fail to get the scholarly disciplinary training that comes from careful listening, note-taking and copying? Perhaps learning will be obtained too easily and eventually university scholarship standards may fall. Printing, if it becomes really popular, may weaken the university's academic standards!"

While the foregoing is only an imaginary conversation, we do know that many professors and priests, prodded by the frightened dictatorial rulers of the time, believed it was dangerous to permit each person to read his own books without getting an authoritative interpretation of them through the professors and the priests. Printing as a free art fell into decline for a while during the 17th century because of the regulations of state and church.

But we know today that printing and inexpensive books did not lower scholastic standards — they made vastly higher standards of learning possible. By 1850, Thomas Carlyle wrote, "The true university of these days is a collection of books."

Now again something new has been happening in the teaching materials field which raises questions about university teaching

and learning procedures. This is the movement toward the production, collection and use of audio-visual materials, specifically, the use of motion pictures, slides, filmstrips, micro-projections, radio, television, charts, and synthetic teaching devices in the university classroom. Again teachers at the university level are asking questions, this time about visual methods of teaching. Do audio-visual materials have a tendency to reduce reading competency? Is the pictured presentation effective because its comprehension requires little or no mental effort? Should everything that can be learned more easily through visual means be taught that way? Will these materials make education so easily available that the discipline of hard scholarly work will become a lost art?

After fifty years of experimentation, some answers to these questions can be given. It is becoming clear that visual presentations and reading do not serve as interchangeable methods of communication but as *complementary* phases. Both visual and verbal materials are necessary to develop a meaningful situation, they are not alternative paths to learning. Meanings may be regarded as functions of situations as they develop through time: they do not consist in "real" things, in pictures, or in words taken out of context. It is better to begin with things, pictures, and words as events on an equal footing (meaning-wise) and to assume that their function as signs develop concurrently as aspects of situations unfolding in time.¹ In practice, this means that the whole range of audio-visual materials is being and should be enlisted in the university's work of conserving, interpreting, and extending knowledge. Added quality and variety are being introduced in the humanities and social sciences where book library use has always been heaviest, and also to the sciences,

1. Kenneth Nordberg, "Visual and Verbal Paths to Learning". *Teachers College Record*. Vol. 54, No. 6, March, 1953.

mathematics and languages.

For purposes of classification, modern instructional materials are grouped as follows by Dr. Lewis Shores, Dean of the Library School, Florida State University.¹

1. The printed word.
 - a. Books : text, reference and "great."
 - b. Serials : periodicals, newspapers, government publications.
 - c. Ephemera : pamphlets, broadsides, brochures.
2. Graphics.
 - a. Flat pictures and stereographs.
 - b. Charts, diagrams, tables.
 - c. Maps and globes.
 - d. Mock-ups, demonstrations.
3. Museum objects.
4. Projections.
 - a. Slides and filmstrips.
 - b. Motion pictures.
5. Sound.
 - a. Radio.
 - b. Recordings : disc, tape.
 - c. Television.

It is difficult and probably unnecessary to draw a sharp line between traditional library materials and so-called audio-visual materials. All five of the foregoing classes of media are found in better university libraries today all over the world. Particularly in the last 15 years, collections of slides, filmstrips, motion pictures and recordings have been growing rapidly and some collections have been built up over much longer periods of time.

Because of the trend among university libraries to encompass more of the newer media in their collections, professors are

1. Florida State University, *General Education: A University Program in Action*. Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1950. p. 165.

surveying the entire range of teaching resources and making requests for the purchase of instructional materials in each of the five classes. In most universities, motion pictures and filmstrips are added to the collection only after consultation with or at the request of the professor who is going to use the materials.

A survey by the Association of College and Research Libraries in the United States reported early in 1955 on the audio-visual services provided by 575 colleges and universities.

84% have an audio-visual service of some kind.

15% have a centralized audio-visual service in the library.

16% had a centralized audio-visual service separate from the library.

53% had decentralized services in the various departments but no university-wide plan.

The general trend is to go from an inadequate decentralized service to a more adequate centralized service. Forty-eight per cent of the institutions with enrollments of over 5000 already have centralized services.

On the question of whether libraries should administer and service all materials of communication for the university including audio-visual materials, the librarians were almost evenly divided with 58% agreeing that the library should administer all services including audio-visual services and 48% not agreeing. Librarian opinions, it was found, were influenced principally by their own experiences in handling audio-visual materials. Where the librarians had no experience and training with audio-visual materials they preferred that a separate organization be established to develop the collection.¹

At International Christian University an audio-visual center is being developed concurrently with the book library. Close working

1. Fleming Bennett, "Audio-Visual Services in Colleges and Universities in the United States", *College and Research Libraries*. January, 1955.

relationships are maintained with the library staff by committee representation. Professors can discover from a central catalog the materials available in all types of media. The collections of the library and the audio-visual center complement each other and do not compete with each other.

The activities of an audio-visual center in a college of liberal arts can be discussed under four headings: (a) a campus teaching materials service; (b) a community teaching materials service; (c) instruction through classes and conferences; and (d) educational research. Let us examine each of these activities with special reference to plans for development at International Christian University.

First is the campus teaching materials service. This is a service to all university faculty members for the purpose of helping them improve their instructional efficiency. Ten functions of a campus teaching materials service are as follows:¹

(1) To offer to the faculty an information service on audio-visual materials and equipment. Requests for information are very specific. The staff of the center has at hand information on how to get motion pictures and filmstrips produced in Japan, America, England and other countries. Information on characteristics and costs of tape recorders in different countries is on file. Numerous projects for improving teaching effectiveness in languages, social studies, natural sciences and humanities need the services and information which an audio-visual center is ready to provide.

(2) To have available an inventory of audio-visual equipment and materials on the campus and to issue lists and catalogs. The existence of a central inventory encourages interdepartmental sharing and helps a university get more service out of the funds

1. Florida State University, *General Education: A University Program in Action*. Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1950. p. 184-5.

expended for equipment.

(3) To offer an efficient projection service to all faculty members requesting such services. The projection of motion pictures, filmstrips and slides must be done with skill and finesse in the classroom if good educational benefits are to result. This work should be done so expertly that it draws little attention to itself.

(4) To repair and maintain all audio-visual equipment. Minor repairs can be made at a university repair shop and the more intricate work can be passed on to commercial electronic engineers.

(5) To house, store and circulate all audio-visual materials and equipment not limited in use to a single university division.

(6) To arrange for systematic previewing by interested faculty members of audio-visual materials in their respective fields.

(7) To coordinate purchases of materials and equipment in the audio-visual field.

(8) To order and return rental films from off-campus sources.

(9) To provide a magnetic recording service to all faculty members requesting such services.

(10) To provide a photographic materials service for instructional use by all departments as requested within the limits of available photographic facilities.

Three of the foregoing functions will be considered in some detail beginning with the third item: a projection service. A system must be established for getting audio-visual materials before students in university classrooms. The professor's instructional purposes are to be served and consequently it is he who selects the materials to be used and the time when they are to be presented. It is also the professor who weaves the concepts of the film or other teaching device into the web of ongoing educational experiences of the student. He sets an intellectual challenge

before the student so that he is more likely to observe the important things that are meant to be observed. After the showing, the professor through further description, exposition and discussion reinforces the learnings gained from the projected materials.

The audio-visual center sets up the routine for the mechanical details of this operation. While this may appear rather simple to do, the "tooling up" process for such a service is not simple if efficient services are to be given. University classroom architecture has not until recently taken into account the need for frequent use of projected materials. The device of preparing one or two large classrooms or auditoriums for showing projected materials is no longer adequate. The use of projected teaching materials in most university classrooms can be anticipated and should be provided for in classroom construction and remodeling.

The projectionist serves the professor during the class hour as a special assistant who takes care of the mechanical details of projection. This releases the professor from these details so that he may give his whole attention to teaching. At International Christian University, the 72 members of the teaching staff made approximately 800 requests for such classroom projection services during the past academic year. At Kent State University in the United States the 350 members of the faculty made approximately 2500 requests for classroom projection services during the 1953—54 academic year. To bring these many materials before classroom groups requires careful organization and well-trained personnel.

A recording service is needed in the modern university. Some needs are met by using small portable tape recorders. Language divisions require many of these to provide the repetition necessary when learning to speak a foreign language. At International Christian University, all students must be functionally bilingual at the beginning of the sophomore year since approximately half of the lectures are given in English and half in Japanese. If

the student is to learn spoken Japanese or spoken English well enough in the freshman year to understand his professor in the sophomore year, he must make use of the help of mechanical devices under the direction of expert teachers.

A professional type tape recorder and a recording studio is also needed and enables the university to provide such services as the following :

1. Make high quality recordings of talks and music for broadcasting on radio. Permanent recording lines can be installed from auditoriums and selected classrooms to the studio to make the recording of special events simple and efficient.

2. Produce high quality teaching materials for classroom use in languages and other areas. Materials produced on professional recorders play back with remarkably high quality even on small inexpensive play-back machines.

3. Record spoken letters and conversations for exchange with other university groups. One example is an exchange organized between students at International Christian University and students in other countries in which information on university life and customs is exchanged and world problems of mutual interest are discussed. The project is called "World Friendship Tapes".

4. Duplicate programs from a library of tape recordings. One example of tapes from the collection at International Christian University is the Moore-Nishimoto tapes for teaching English pronunciation. Approximately 100 lessons for the six years of junior and senior high schools are available to teachers of English. Blank tapes may be mailed from the school to International Christian University where the selected lessons will be copied on the tape and the duplicated copy returned to the school. A nominal fee to cover labor costs is charged. Plans are being made to expand the collection of recorded programs available for duplication.

In the United States, a national "tapes for teaching" library has recently been established making available to teachers approximately 1000 lessons on various subjects. These lessons were originally produced by educational radio stations for broadcast purposes following which copies were deposited in the national tape library.

The photographic production service of a university can create many unique teaching materials. The 35 mm. slide is one of the most useful classroom teaching devices and at the same time is quite simple to produce. At International Christian University, approximately 1200 slides have been produced during the past academic year by the audio-visual center at the request of the teaching staff. A fourth of the members of the teaching staff have used this service. Professors are urged to bring their photographic projects to the audio-visual center where the professor and the technician can cooperatively plan to make the project a satisfactory one.

Growing out of a university campus teaching materials service is a community teaching materials service. Briefly, this is sharing with others the teaching tools which a university has found valuable for itself.

One university can share with another the films, filmstrips, and recordings which have been collected. Universities should do this for two reasons: first because an important service can be given to other universities, and second because the materials are too expensive for one university to finance alone. It is doubtful whether any Japanese university, at present, can afford to build an adequate film library of perhaps 1000 titles unless the costs are shared with others through lending.

For example, assume that a 20 minute black-and-white film costs approximately ¥36,000. In ten years it will quite probably be obsolete but one university will not wear it out in that time.

However, if it is lent to others at a reasonable fee of ¥900 an average of four times a year for 10 years, part of the investment will come back and the university will still have the use of the film on its own campus. This practice is common in some countries, and consideration should be given to such an arrangement for sharing film costs in Japan.

Few university-level teaching films are produced in Japan because such production is not yet profitable. However, a considerable number of university-level teaching films have been imported from England, France, Canada and the United States and are helping meet instructional needs.

The United States Information Service libraries in the American cultural centers in Japan have a fine collection of film titles. Most of the films in these libraries were selected because they are good social education films appealing to a general audience of various ages and educational backgrounds. They are serving this purpose well. Not many of the more technical university-level films used in America are found in these libraries. Neither, it might be added, are many of the excellent films made especially for the elementary and secondary school classrooms. The universities of Japan need film libraries where university-level films from all countries are brought together and shared on a cost basis. International Christian University with its staff representing many countries might well lead the way in beginning such a film collection.

In conclusion, the purpose of the effort going into expanded university libraries and audio-visual centers is to improve instruction. Education, after all, is nothing more than putting today's experiences into a more meaningful context by reweaving them into generalizations and systems of generalizations. The film becomes a human document which gives life and meaning and application to the essential data. The professor collects and

offers his students not only films, recordings, and books, but the vision of life recreated for their understanding and evaluation.

It is a mistake if the liberal arts college fails to make a team out of textbook and film, reference work and recording. Each can be put to the job it does best and together they can work in their different ways to offer students a better liberal education.