

**SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICES
FOR DEAF CHILDREN
Audio-Visual Material**

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For the past twenty years, libraries have been extending their services to include motion pictures, filmstrips, and recordings. In the long view of history, this is hardly startling. The information of mankind has been preserved in many forms, including clay tablets, scrolls, and manuscripts before the printing press was invented. Early American libraries included files of flat pictures. The first half of this century has seen the development of moving pictures and series of still pictures arranged in sequence on a strip of film. It is logical that these new informational materials be added to library collections. Because of a reluctance on the part of some, or a misunderstanding of the educational uses of audio and visual materials, or because of a lack of staff help, some school libraries have not embraced these newer media of information. Some school systems have established separate departments for libraries and audio-visual materials; others have consolidated libraries or instructional materials centers.

Discussion of this subject, with its attendant philosophical and administrative problems, became so widespread that in 1956 the American Association of School Librarians adopted an official statement on school libraries as instructional materials centers. The first two paragraphs are quoted here since they are pertinent to the material discussed in this chapter.

“The American Association of School Librarians believes that a school library, in addition to doing its vital work of individual reading guidance and development of the school curriculum, should serve the school as a center for instructional materials. Instructional materials include books—the literature of children, young people, and adults—other printed materials, films, recordings, and newer media developed to aid learning.”

“Teaching methods, advocated by leaders in the field of curriculum development and now used in elementary and secondary education, call for extensive and frequently combined use of traditional along with many new and different kinds of materials. Since these methods depend for their success upon a cross-media approach to learning, a convenient way of approaching instructional materials on a subject or problem basis must be immediately at hand in each school. Historically, libraries of all types have been established to provide convenient centers for books and reading and for locating ideas and information important to the communities they serve. The interest a modern school now has in finding and using good motion pictures, sound recordings, filmstrips, and other newer materials simply challenges and gives increased dimension to established library roles.”*

The bringing together of all materials in one center is reasonable, economical, and a great help to the busy teacher planning a unit on any subject. From one place she can gather the books, filmstrips, pictures, and even motion pictures on her subject.

*This statement of philosophy was passed by unanimous vote at the business meeting of the American Association of School Librarians during the American Library Association Conference, Miami Beach, June 21, 1956.

From the librarian's point of view, the consolidation of all materials in one center also seems reasonable. The librarian is handling and selecting materials all the time, she hears all the teacher and student requests daily, and is aware of the wants and needs of all grades and all departments within the school. The same principles of selection and balanced collection building that apply to books also apply to films.

No librarian can take on an additional major responsibility, such as responsibility for the school's audio-visual education program without adequate assistance. But if assistance is provided, especially clerical assistance, to relieve the librarian of typing and other routine duties, there is no reason why her professional competency as a selector and provider of instructional materials cannot be applied to films and records. It will cost the school less than it would to provide two professional specialists; and since the materials are most often used together, this is a great convenience for the faculty who can get all materials on a subject by visiting one central place in the school.

SELECTION OF MOTION PICTURES

A librarian, or teacher-librarian, who is unfamiliar with films but has responsibility for them, should do a lot of viewing. As reading fine books sharpens one's critical judgment of writing, so looking at good films develops a discerning eye and taste. Motion pictures should be sought out in all possible subject fields and for all age levels.

In the case of motion pictures, some questions to ask oneself when evaluating a title are the following:

- Is the film well organized?
- Has the material been well edited?
- Is it focused directly on its subject?
- Does it ramble and introduce irrelevant material?
- Does it have integrity?
- Is it factually accurate?
- Has it been independently produced with an educational purpose in mind?
- Or, if it is commercially sponsored, is the advertising material acceptable?
- Has an educator been a consultant or helped on the production?
- Is the photography good?
- Is the narration clear?
- Is the sound track good?
- Has music been used?
- Has direct, synchronized sound been used?
- Or, if the narration has been added after the film footage was assembled, is it appropriate?
- Have optics, charts, diagrams been used when appropriate?
- Is the method of presentation appropriate for the age of the audience for which it is intended?

These are good questions to ask when selecting films for any audience. Here are some additional factors to be considered when choosing 16-mm sound films for the deaf:

First, does the subject matter lend itself to visual presentation? Some subject fields, such as social studies, for example, are more easily presented visually than other subjects. Then, has the subject

matter in a specific film actually been clearly and successfully visualized? Two different directors can treat the same subject in very different ways. A talented and experienced motion picture director will use his camera as an eye to select the most effective pictures through which to see and understand a subject. Has the camera been selective? Has it moved in for the explanatory close-ups? Has it moved back for the long shots that establish over-all perspective? In short, is the film under consideration really a *motion picture* rather than a lecture?

Has too heavy a burden been imposed on the sound track? Sometimes a picture useful with the hearing may have placed so much pertinent information on the sound track that it is not useful with the deaf. An example would be a picture of industrial production showing in quick succession pictures of steel mills, assembly lines, moving machinery, and workers while the voice on the sound track quotes statistics, percentages, and other information basic to a true understanding of the materials. Such a film requires such extensive pre-teaching that its use is uneconomical from the viewpoint of teacher and class time. There are other and better ways of presenting such material.

Another type of poor combination of visual and sound treatment for the deaf is the educational biographical film such as the one entitled *Longfellow*.^{*} Direct sound is used. Longfellow talks to some children, he reads them a poem, and the children question the poet. The characters move about, often speaking to one another with their backs to the camera. Even when they face the camera, dialogue is so rapid it could not be lip-read.

Another example of rather poor for use with the deaf is a whole series of attitudinal films on conduct, manners, and how to get along with people. In these films, groups of young people are pictured discussing these subjects. Films like these have been given a fair trial at Lexington with good teachers and good advance preparation. They were found to be meaningless, and their use was discontinued. Better material for the deaf may be found on such subjects in filmstrips and books.

Re-creations of great moments in history are also hard to use for the same reasons. Arithmetic films also yield little. Columns of figures or decimals and fractions appearing and disappearing or moving about on the screen while the narrator gives a spoken explanation are impossible for use without hearing.

^{*}*Longfellow*, Encyclopedia Britannica Films.

Best Possibilities

For the deaf, the subject fields offering the best possibilities for use of the sound motion pictures available on today's educational market are the fields of science, nature study, and the social studies. Films showing animals and animal families either in their natural habitat or in zoos are vivid and satisfying. Films on farm life, planting, and harvesting, on birds, trees, butterflies, and the like are excellent. Motion pictures on transportation—airplanes, airports, buses, ships, freight trains, passenger trains—are visual and clear. Films on how milk is processed and marketed, how bricks are made, how glass is made, all offer rich, vicarious experiences and much information. Thoughtful travelogues and films depicting life in other lands or far away states greatly enrich the teaching program. Motion pictures on the four seasons are particularly useful.

When previewing sound motion pictures for possible use with deaf groups, it is a good idea to turn the sound track off from time to time and view the film in silence. This is how the deaf will see it. A hearing person looking at a film for the first time without hearing the accompanying narration will get a fresh insight into what it means to be deaf, will get a clearer idea of whether or not the film may be usable, and can assess more accurately how much preparation will be necessary to make the viewing meaningful to the children.

Where To Get Information

The best single directory in the educational film field is the *Education Film Guide*, published by the H.W. Wilson Company. The latest volume is 1953, but annual supplements are issued. *The Audio Visual and Educational Screen Magazine** has a good monthly reviewing column on new 16-mm films conducted by staff members at Indiana University. The catalogs of producing companies are helpful as are the film catalogs of state departments of education or state libraries. Some local public libraries lend educational films to schools free of charge. Some local equipment dealers who sell projectors maintain film rental libraries.

The unit cost of motion pictures is such that most individual schools cannot afford to buy them. Schools which are a part of a system may have their own collections, but for the small individual school, rental of motion pictures seems the only feasible plan. The proposed federal program for captioned films for the deaf will be a great help to all of us.

At the Lexington School Library, almost all educational motion pictures are rented from the local office of Encyclopedia Britannica Films (EB). EB Films is one of the major classroom production companies. There are others, of course, but EB Films has a rental plan which makes it very easy for the small individual school to rent groups of motion pictures on a weekly basis. They are a satisfactory source for the major group of films used each school year. They are supplemented from time to time with films from other sources such as the Bell Laboratories, the American Museum of Natural History, and so on.

*Chicago: 2000 Lincoln Park West Bldg., Chicago 14, Ill.

SELECTION OF FILMSTRIPS

Filmstrips cannot be rented; they must be purchased. Since their unit cost is low, approximately \$5.00 per title, and, like books, they can be used many times by many classes, it is financially practicable to acquire useful and well-balanced collections on many subjects.

Sound filmstrips, i.e. those which have an accompanying long-playing record providing narration, are not useful with the deaf. Fortunately, most filmstrips are silent and all subject fields seem to be adequately covered.

Selection of filmstrips for the deaf should winnow out the banal, poor art, or photographic work, and titles whose language and sentence construction is too difficult for the age of the deaf children who will be seeing them. The last applies only to those filmstrips in which the language is such an integral part of the presentation that it must be read in order to use the filmstrip. Some filmstrips can be used for their picture sequence alone, or the librarian or teacher can paraphrase where language is too difficult.

Filmstrips cover almost as many subject areas as do books, and since they are exceedingly useful for use in the classrooms at all times or for individual independent viewing by older children, they should be purchased and made readily available for use throughout the school.

The best single directory of commercially produced filmstrips and the sources from which they may be purchased is the *Filmstrip Guide* published by the H.W. Wilson Company of New York City.

A specially selected, graded, and annotated list of filmstrips for use with the deaf has been prepared at the Lexington School. It lists, describes, and suggests the grade level and possible uses of over 300 filmstrips in the Lexington School Library. It was published by the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf.

MOTION PICTURES, FILMSTRIPS, AND PICTURES

MOTION PICTURES

Because projectors for sound motion pictures are expensive, bulky, and heavy, and because special wiring and blackout curtains are necessary, not many schools can make provision for showing motion pictures in individual classrooms. Usually a central room can be equipped where classes can be scheduled to see motion pictures. At the Lexington School, for example, an effort is made in its present very old building to provide both mobile and stationary equipment for motion picture use. One 16-mm projector on a rolling stand is housed in the library and may be borrowed for use in assemblies, in the nurseries, or in the playrooms for after school entertainment. A second projector is permanently set up in the visual education room and is ready for use at an instant's notice. Teachers wishing to use the room and equipment may reserve it in advance with the librarian.

The visual education room was remodeled from a classroom, and a door was cut through to the adjacent library to allow supervision by one person for both rooms. In the remodeled room, ceiling, and walls were treated acoustically, a frame was built around the window to prevent light seepage and a dark curtain was installed. A fan was also built into the window to draw in or force out air. Rheostats were connected with the speaker, permitting the insertion of the children's Y cords, so that when possible they may hear background music or ambient sounds. Children, incidentally, greatly appreciate listening although they expect to hear something the moment they plug in and have to be taught that the sound "goes with" the movie. A permanent screen was installed, and book shelving and cupboards were constructed to house the filmstrip collection, the circulating strip and slide projectors, the tachistoscope and other equipment and supplies.

Teachers can and do request specific films on many subjects to be ordered for use when they wish them. The largest volume of films used, however, is used as a part of the library program. Film showings are scheduled as alternates to the oral storytelling program and groups of films for lower, middle, and upper schools are brought in every other week from late September through early June. These will include also a half a dozen very simple films throughout the year scheduled for the preschool visits to the library.

When films are used above the kindergarten level, the children stop in the library where there is a blackboard. Here preteaching takes place, and they are prepared for what they will see. The name of the film is written on the board, background information is given, and important points to look for are

explained in advance. The children then go to the visual education room for the actual showing. At this time a spotlight is projected from the back of the room to the side of the screen. Either the librarian or the teacher sits or stands in the spotlight with a pointer. Thus, she can talk and point to specific things on the screen as the motion picture is being shown. If a film is complex, there will be discussion and a second showing. There is always discussion whether or not the film is shown a second time. Some of the films used are story-type pictures like *Little Black Lamb*, which tells about a girl, her pet, and a school pet show. Some provide general experiences and background information like *Children in Autumn*, *Children in Winter*, and so on. Others tell about community helpers such as in *The Fireman*, and *The Policeman*, or about life in other lands like *Children of England*, or *Children of Holland*. Since teachers of lower and middle schools accompany their children to the library at Lexington, they can later pick up and reinforce any subject or any language they deem wise. Language is also repeated in the conversation period in the library following each film showing. For example, a motion picture like *Children in Winter*, which is excellent in its simplicity, can be used at several levels. In conversation and in writing on the blackboard, vocabulary will be brought out which may include snowman, snowball, snow storm, sled, slide, coasting, skiing, ice skates, icicles, thermometer, and temperature. One may talk about the shadows on the snow, or the tracks and footprints in the snow, or the white breath showing in the frosty air.

Groups of films which are exceedingly useful with the deaf are two series* for which accompanying film readers have been prepared. The easier series is *It's Fun to Find Out*, film-story books by Paul Witty. The more difficult series is the *Children of Many Lands* series with readers by Mabel O'Donnell. The pictures in the readers are stills taken from the motion pictures, and the text is the same as the narration on the film. These readers were designed to be used *after* the film showing with hearing children. For the deaf, they are best used *in advance* to prepare the children for what they will see. The *Children of Many Lands* series, which includes England, Spain, France, Italy, Norway, Switzerland, China, and Japan, are from Row, Peterson, and Company. The readers for the easier series may be purchased from D.C. Heath Company. They are all inexpensive paper backs. At Lexington, we have purchased them by the dozen. When one of the films is to be shown, the librarian distributes groups of readers a week in advance to the classes concerned so that the children come prepared for the motion picture.

The use of motion pictures offers a curious paradox. They enrich the experiences of average and bright classes, but they are also especially helpful to slow classes and to classes of poor lipreading ability. Many films in the areas of social studies, and homemaking, cooking, table setting, and the like offer a great deal of useful information to vocational classes.

Motion pictures should never be used without prior preview and planning by the teacher or librarian. This is necessary for effective use of motion pictures with hearing children, and it is even more important in the case of the deaf. Unable to hear the sound track's commentary and explanation, the deaf child merely sees a rapidly changing series of moving pictures. The action will be incomprehensible unless careful preparation has been made. This is true for teaching films of information and for films which tell a story. The exquisite and aesthetically satisfying *Puss in Boots*** is not understandable when shown to deaf children unless the story has either been read or told orally.

Films can greatly enrich the children's experience and understanding in many subject fields, but only when their use is mastered and controlled by the adult using them.

USE OF FILMSTRIPS

As a book must be read, or a motion picture previewed, a filmstrip should also be screened in advance of its use by teacher or librarian. A lesson plan, a story hour, or an assembly program cannot be built around a filmstrip without thought devoted to the purpose for using the filmstrip, and planning regarding the precise concepts and exact language to be gained through its use.

*Both series of films available from Encyclopedia Britannica Films.

**Encyclopedia Britannica Films.

The person using the filmstrip should:

- Have the sequence of pictures clearly fixed in her mind.
- Decide upon the method of presentation (i.e., the text will be read, or will be paraphrased, or there will be picture interpretation).
- Have considered the language in the text and worked out a new one, if necessary.
- Have determined the place of the filmstrip in the larger lesson plan. (Filmstrips are sometimes used to introduce a subject, sum it up, or review it.)
- Have the physical and mechanical arrangements under control. Last minute hitches in electrical or other equipment can mean a wasted class or library period.

Filmstrips are versatile tools. Nursery school teachers use filmstrips on pets, zoos, toys, and farm animals during their periods of quiet activity and when inclement weather curtails trips and outside play. Filmstrips are excellent for reading readiness programs and are heavily used for this purpose by kindergarten and the youngest groups in lower school. Also very useful in lower school are the many titles on community helpers and community agencies such as the fire department, police department, and so on.

In the middle and upper schools, the science teacher, the arithmetic teacher, the social studies teachers and the language and reading teachers all can find a wealth of material in the filmstrip collection.

In the library the filmstrip presentations of nursery tales such as *The Three Little Pigs*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, fairy tales such as *The Princess and the Pea*, *The Shoemaker and the Elves*, are ideal for adding spice and variety to story hours. And for older groups, filmstrip editions of *Aesop's Fables*, the Arthurian legends, Shakespeare's plays and other classics are invaluable. The latter usually present a streamlined version of the plot, or story line, and identify and fix characters visually in the child's mind. They provide good introductions to difficult material and can be used in conjunction with books for classes of good readers or independently with poor readers.

One special use of filmstrips that may be made with the deaf is that of showing them to provide inspiration for the beginnings of original composition. For example, a young class making the first difficult break from news about "I" and "me" and "we" and "our" may use a simple, brief filmstrip such

as *Puppy Plays A Trick* to develop a short composition on what the puppy did to fool the children and their mother.

Filmstrips have certain inherent advantages which make their use flexible and effective.

- They are highly portable. The equipment for their use is small and light-weight and can easily be carried into individual classrooms.
- They are relatively inexpensive. Permanent collections can be purchased so that the material is always available within the school building for use whenever needed.
- Filmstrips can be shown at whatever pace, slow or fast, that is desirable for any given class. Speed is not mechanically controlled. It is controlled by teacher or librarian. Direction can be reversed to go back to a picture and each frame may be studied as long as is desirable.
- The large-sized picture projected on the wall for all to see makes the filmstrip a unique tool for group study. A small picture or the page of a book is difficult for the whole class to see, whereas the brightly-lighted large picture is easily visible to all. Moreover, the darkened room and the brilliant light focused on one interesting picture lessen distractions and are conducive to a high degree of attention.

Casual unprepared uses of filmstrips as time fillers or spur-of-the-moment activities are not desirable. Thoughtful well-prepared use of both factual and fictional filmstrips can be very satisfactory and meaningful in almost all subject fields throughout the entire school.

PICTURE FILE

The file of flat pictures, classified and arranged by subject, is a rich source of information in any library, but is especially valuable in a school for the deaf. In no other type of school are the uses of individual pictures, or series of related pictures, so varied and so integrally a part of the curriculum. Just about every subject under the sun might be included. The chief factors to bear in mind when selecting pictures are:

- Method in which subject is pictured.
- Suitability for the age level with which the picture will be used.
- Suitability for use in language work.
- Suitability for use in reading readiness program.

The picture file requires fairly constant attention if it is to be kept up-to-date and provided with current material.

It should be organized under subject headings which will be the most useful in a school for the deaf. Headings for language principles, verbs, etc., which will bring together pictures illustrating language will be helpful. Sequences of pictures for interpretation and reading readiness are another useful category

which would not ordinarily be found in a regular school library picture file. Many pictures on holidays, the seasons, pets, farm animals, and zoo animals will be heavily used.

The practice of making note of requests which cannot be filled will be helpful to the librarian in selecting pictures for addition to the file.

Picture material should be durably mounted, clearly labeled, and the files located in an accessible place.

PHOTOGRAPHIC SERVICE

In a school for the deaf where direct experiences for conceptual and language development are constantly being structured by teachers, it is frequently highly desirable to capture that experience on film. The resulting pictures are then used for language work growing out of the experience.

For use in connection with this activity, cameras, films and flashbulbs may be provided in the library and circulated to teachers and supervisors upon request. A twice-weekly messenger service deposits negatives for development and provides prompt pick-up of finished pictures so that language work may be done as soon as possible after the experience.

The library itself may participate in photographic and language activities. A photographic album of school Christmas activities maintained from year to year and captioned by the children makes an interesting chronological record loved by the children and useful for Christmas story hours. A photographic album of important people in the school maintained by the children as a *Who's Who* in school is also a useful and interesting volume for library use.

RECORDINGS FOR AUDITORY TRAINING

Because of the highly specialized use of recordings with the deaf, it is quite likely that their selection will be the responsibility of the supervisor of auditory training, just as selection of basal reading textbooks is the responsibility of the reading supervisor. Or, it may be a shared responsibility between the auditory training supervisor and the librarian.

In either case, recordings may be indexed and housed in the library and circulated from it as a convenience for the faculty.

EQUIPMENT

Since the library is the center for instructional materials which will include those needing equipment for their use, the library must provide that equipment.

A technician, or mechanic, employed to keep the school's equipment in repair may be responsible for the inspection and good working order of projectors and turntables, but equipment necessary for the use of teaching materials should be supervised and circulated from the library to teachers and other staff members as needed.

How much equipment is adequate to make good use of audio and visual teaching materials depends on rate of use. Absence of sufficient equipment will necessarily curtail use, and provision of it will encourage use.

Schools for the deaf will ordinarily provide a turntable in *every* classroom in connection with the group hearing aids for auditory training.

Equipment housed centrally in the library both for use in the visual education room and for circulation to classrooms in a school having a student body of 250 may be as follows:*

Number

- 3 16-mm sound motion picture projectors
 - 1 stationary
 - 2 circulating
- 1 16-mm silent motion picture projector (circulating)
- 1 8-mm silent motion picture projector (circulating)
- 7 filmstrip projectors
 - 2 with wide-angle lenses for small rooms
 - 2 combination type (slides & filmstrips)
 - 3 regular lens for filmstrips only
- 1 automatic 2 x 2 slide projector
- 1 overhead projector (circulating)
- 2 tachistoscopes (circulating)
- 1 3-speed high-fidelity turntable (circulating auditory trainer)
- 5 cameras
 - 1 Cineflex
 - 1 Kodak Brownie
 - 1 Brownie Starflash
 - 1 Kodak Pony II
 - 1 Polaroid
- 8 beaded screens
 - 3 stationary
 - 2 tripod (circulating)
 - 3 hanging (circulating)
- 2 individual filmstrip viewers
 - 1 stationary
 - 1 circulating

*Lexington School for the Deaf