

TESTING TEACHER TRAINEES BY MEANS OF  
CLOSED-CIRCUIT TELEVISION AND MLA FILM NO. 5

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IN THE QUEST for effective techniques in the use of audio-visual materials for training teachers of foreign languages, the following description of experience at the English Language Institute may be useful. It will be of specific interest to those engaged in training teachers who are searching for ways of testing the results of their efforts.

Ideally, no doubt, the trainee should be judged on his performance in front of a class, but practical considerations often rule this out. Pencil and paper exams are the most easily graded and afford greatest control over the largest number of contributing factors. Theory is easy to test in this way. But our concern is with the fair and efficient testing of the application of the theory.

For several terms, the English Language Institute felt it had neatly solved the problem through the use of its closed-circuit TV facilities. Daniel Glicksberg one of the Institute's best and most experienced teachers would on a designated day use his Intensive English Course class to demonstrate "good" and "bad" techniques. The performance was carried over the closed TV circuit to a viewing room where the teacher trainees were gathered and ready to note the procedures they had been taught were effective and those that were not. The Methods teachers would at the same time note what they expected their students to catch and after consultation with each other and Dr. Glicksberg, had a check list against which to match the trainees' observations and something of an absolute from which to derive test grades. Both teachers and trainees seemed satisfied that such a TV demonstration was a fair test and a satisfactory one.

This past December found the English Language Institute Methods Course without Dr. Glicksberg. (He was in Japan.) No doubt one of the other teachers could have taken his role - although this is not at all certain since presenting both sides of a variety of techniques requires no little acting ability. However that may be, we decided this time to use as the point of

departure for our test, Film No. 5 "Modern Techniques in Language Teaching" of the MLA Film Series Principles and Methods of Teaching a Second Language.\*

The students of the Methods classes took their notes as they watched the film and were given time to re-write them after it was over. Each of the three Methods teachers had prepared questions to be answered by his particular section.

My own section was asked to: "In terms of the concepts discussed in class, comment on the theories and techniques demonstrated in this film." That is to say, using Edgar Dale's terms, the class was to enumerate, identify and interpret what they saw with the point of reference the material covered in the course just completed. It was to be a matter of recognizing techniques used - as well as those that might have been used, depending on the teacher's purpose - and relating them to underlying theories as discussed in class.

The other two Methodsteachers - William Norris and Robert Dakin - proceeded a little differently: They prepared specific questions which they handed to the students the last day the class met before the exam. Thus the students knew precisely what their teachers expected them to observe. Both Mr. Dakin and Mr. Norris feel that some of their questions should be re-worded but they have allowed me to include them here for whatever help or inspiration they may be to our fellow Methods teachers.

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