



Practical Demonstrations of Effectiveness

IT WOULD be desirable to plan several types of conspicuous demonstrations which might, on the basis of their merits, be dramatized and publicized.

The Prototype Classroom

A new type of classroom, which we shall call the prototype classroom, could serve two highly significant, related functions. One of these is the demonstration function, providing a place where teachers could go to see the very best and latest materials used with great skill by excellent teachers. Another is the service-testing function. Such a classroom could provide a place where the teacher has access to resources which are not now generally available and tries using these materials for periods of from four to six weeks. After such a service-testing period, the teacher would be in an excellent position to decide which equipment and materials are important for his own particular area and what modifications are needed in order to make them more useful.

Various teachers of different subjects at different grade levels could be assigned to teach in this room. A committee of experts should be available to suggest ideas for them to try and to help them to work out knotty problems they encounter. After sufficient experience, each teacher should ask about everything tried: "Did it get in the way of my teaching or did it help me?" The ideas that have clearly proven their value in this classroom could then

be adapted to existing classes in each subject and incorporated into the physical design of the new classrooms in any schools to be built.

In the beginning, the prototype classrooms probably should be of the conference type with equipment such as the overhead projector and push-button control of lights and projectors so that motion pictures or slides can be started and stopped from the front of the room. An opaque projector should be easily available. In other words, the teacher should be at no inconvenience in using audio-visual materials even for as short a time as 30 seconds. We estimate that approximately \$4000 should pay for every conceivable thing that one might want in such a room, but an acceptable setup could be put together for approximately \$2000.

We believe that 100 such classrooms, strategically distributed about the country, would be exceedingly effective in developing superior teaching ideas and disseminating them throughout our school system.

A Model Program in Psychology

Most university and teachers college students take an elementary course in psychology. Therefore, if a good program could be set up in elementary psychology, it would affect most people going through colleges, including future teachers, military leaders, industrialists, and the more influential, articulate part of the general public. Furthermore, such a model program would set a standard of excellence which other departments in the college might well be moved to emulate.

Psychologists should be particularly interested in this program since they are trained to be responsive to research results and many of them are especially interested in the problems of learning and teaching. The American Psychological Association might sponsor the project and seek foundation support.

First a representative committee would be appointed to formulate an over-all plan. This could be done during a summer workshop. The group could re-examine the goals of the elementary

psychology curriculum to decide which of them could be better realized if optimum use were made of the best materials. They could survey the needs for *all* types of teaching materials. They could examine the materials that are already available, decide what new ones are needed, and outline a program for producing them. For instance, a bright graduate student might be paid to spend a summer going over the films in the library of the Teaching Film Custodians (or scripts borrowed from the producing companies) for relevant psychological material. He might look at the pictures which seem suitable and assemble recommended samples of footage to be brought to a more expert panel for a final job of selection. To give a single example, he could assemble some sequences illustrating various emotions for use as demonstration materials. A given sequence might be edited first without any context and then repeated with more and more contextual material added, in order to demonstrate in a classroom experiment the role of various cues in identifying emotions.

Other materials—demonstrations, classroom experiments, and pictorial tests—would have to be produced. More than a dozen universities throughout the country have both reasonably good production units and good departments of psychology. If the efforts of these dozen universities could be organized into an over-all plan, an excellent series of materials could be produced. Such materials could raise the whole level of instruction in elementary psychology and set a high standard for other departments to emulate. Many of the new materials produced would be valuable for use on educational television.

Films Demonstrating Superior Teaching Techniques

It would also be valuable in different subjectmatter areas to make films demonstrating examples of recent improvements in teaching and contrasting them with the older methods commonly in use. The vivid example set by these films would help in the dissemination of the superior teaching which might or might not

involve the use of graphic materials. For example, as Wertheimer (1945) has pointed out, many geometry teachers present the proof for the formula for determining the area of a parallelogram in a relatively rote manner which does not lead to real understanding and does not transfer readily to new situations. Two films could be made, one using the all-too-conventional rote method and the other the superior method of logical learning. Then a demonstration experiment could be performed comparing the effectiveness of the two methods. Finally, the material could be edited to demonstrate the two methods to geometry teachers.

Such a project would serve two purposes: to show that learning by films is not necessarily more rote and specific than learning by other media, and to encourage geometry teachers to improve their methods of teaching. After these methods have been vividly demonstrated via the film, teachers could use them with the blackboard, cutouts, and other simpler media.