



Sound films--a new educational trend

O. U. TAKES THE LEAD BY ESTABLISHING A LIBRARY OF NEW FILMS FOR USE IN OKLAHOMA'S SCHOOLROOMS

By Sam Walker

A group of students marveled as, before their eyes, in their classroom, mountain ranges were thrown up, volcanoes erupted, and great rivers roared and tumbled down rocky gorges. How rocks and soil were formed—in short, the history of the formation of the earth—was being shown the students.

These students were viewing one of the films from the Audio-Visual Instruction library recently established in the Extension Division of the University of Oklahoma. This new library is made up of sound motion pictures which have been filmed with the definite idea of putting into action and sound the subjects studied by students of all grades.

For a quarter of a century the Extension Division has afforded schools of this state visual education aids, through silent films, and lantern slides.

"Our new plan," says Herbert H. Scott, associate director of the Extension Division, "is to provide the most modern and complete library of films in the country on subjects synchronized with the regular curriculum of students in all school grades." This service will include pictures for pupils in the lower grades as well as pictures suited to fill the needs of students in University classes.

A typical film shows the movements and actions of tiny seeds as they are dispersed over the earth from their parent plants. The seeds, many times magnified, are shown as they float from the parent plant by parachute to a place favorable to their germination and growth. The wild oat seed is pictured, as the seed with its own "legs" moves over the ground to find a bit of favorable soil. Another variety of seed is filmed, showing how it buries itself in the soil by means of a corkscrew-like attachment.

Those mentioned, and many more

wonders of natural science are portrayed in the films of the new library. In addition to natural science pictures, there are films to aid in the teaching of music and literature. In fact there are films on nearly every subject that is taught in schools today.

Mr. Scott is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma with B. A. and M. A. degrees. He has had special training in the field of education, and has been with the Extension Division for ten years.

"There is more intense interest in Oklahoma in the use of visual aids for teaching at this time than ever before, and we are meeting the situation as rapidly as possible," he declares.

The visual instruction library now contains more than two hundred of the new 16 millimeter films, both sound and silent. Additions are being made frequently, and films are also deposited with the department for a period of time by different government units and industries.

There are more than a hundred schools in the state operating the new sound picture machines as part of their regular class work.

"Formerly films used in instruction consisted as much of entertainment as education, applied only remotely to the subject being studied, and were often filled with advertising," says Boyd Gunning, director of the Visual Education Department. "Also there was much use of travel film and others that could be used as educational films, after cutting some scenes and adding a few others."

This is no longer true; especially in the making of the films for the new sound library. Much care is taken to incorpor-

ate worthwhile material in them. As much as fifty thousand dollars has been spent on one 15-minute production.

A proposed complete program of audio-visual instruction in the physical, social, and biological sciences has been compiled for the University. Eminent workers in education have surveyed the various colleges, fields, and departments of the University to learn exactly the material being studied, and at hand, before attempting to insert into courses pictures already filmed or to make supplementary pictures for the courses.

A short course in audio-visual instruction methods has been suggested, and preliminary steps have been taken toward teaching such a course in June.

The films used for the new "educational talkies" are only 16 millimeters wide in contrast to the former bulky size of 35 millimeters. A safety feature of these new smaller films is that they are made of non-inflammable material. This feature eliminates the necessity of licensed operators and fireproof projection rooms.

Dr. V. C. Arnsperger, of New York, director of research for the Erpi corporation which makes the films for the new library, recently conducted a survey on visual instruction results.

He found that "950 grade school students and 1,425 junior high students using sound films in natural science learned 26 per cent more, and those using sound pictures learned 27 per cent more than students taught by ordinary class methods."

And so the modern schoolboy is not likely to be found with "lagging footsteps" on the way to school. Because he never knows what dramatic new sound picture may be awaiting him in the classroom. And best of all, he's learning things faster and better.