

If we were to analyse the process of learning, we would find that students only learn 11 per cent of what they hear and 83 per cent of what they see. Even more significant is the fact that they are likely to remember only 20 per cent of what they hear but 60 per cent of what they hear and see. This implies that traditional methods of teaching have only a limited usefulness in helping us achieve our objectives as teachers. Most people, moreover, are visual minded. Today's student are exposed to a wide variety of audio visuals daily and respond to all of them in varying degrees. Their hearing and sight faculties are developed to a high degree due to the influence of television, cinema, radio and the increased opportunity for travel and observation. Therefore, their response to the talk and chalk method is sorely limited. Visualization seems absolutely necessary in today's teaching, not only as an aid to learning and remembering, but also as a stimulating and motivating device.

In a nutshell, communication is what teaching is all about. Our task is to communicate with our students as effectively as possible. Traditionally we have relied heavily on the spoken word to achieve this objective. Technology however, has produced more effective channels, channels that are more effective in putting the message across to the receivers. Though the spoken word is the most common method of communication, in Malaysian classrooms anyway, it must be stressed that communication can be achieved effectively by using varied channels.

We have at our disposal the cassette-recorder, the overhead projector, slides, films, filmstrips, television and the video-cassette recorder to enhance our teaching methods. Though these media have varying degrees of usefulness, there is no doubt that they do offer vast avenues for exploitation by the imaginative and resourceful teacher.

In deciding the most suitable aids for use in the classroom, the teacher needs to consider the

various types of equipment and their features. Needless, to say, the more features a piece of equipment has, the greater its potential for exploitation in the classroom. Below is a listing of some of these aids and their features:

### **Cassette-recorder**

#### *1 Output*

A medium-sized machine, which has an output of 12-16 watts is needed. You can use smaller cassette-recorders for recording material but not for play-back in the classroom. The output has to be sufficient to enable the whole class to hear.

#### *2 Stereo*

A mono cassette player cannot replay stereo recordings but a stereo cassette player can play both mono and stereo recordings. It is better to get a stereo player because most of the songs which can be utilized for language teaching are recorded in stereo.

#### *3 Operable on mains and battery*

The cassette-recorder must be one that can be powered by both battery and mains because of the difficulties using power points in the classroom.

#### *4 Counter*

A digital counter will help you locate the programmes you want to play in class.

#### *5 Cue/Review*

This allows you to go back to the exact spot on the tape and to play it back, all in one smooth movement.

### **Radio**

A player that has both cassette-recorder and radio will enable you to record speaking texts for language teaching. This dual combination allows you to record directly from the radio and so cuts out outside noise.

### 1 *Bass and treble response*

Certain sounds (e.g. the consonants /t/, /d/, /s/, /z/) can only be heard on high frequency and you need to turn up the treble response. Other sounds (e.g. vowel sounds) can only be heard on low frequency so that the bass response has to be turned up.

### 2 *Microphone*

Most cassette recorders have built-in mikes but it is useful to have an external mike on a lead (sometimes referred to as a 'mike jack') especially for interviews or group work, where you need to pass the mike around. The external mike should have an on/off switch on it.

### 3 *Line in/line out*

This feature enables you to make good duplicate copies of any tapes you may produce, as it cuts out outside noise which you will get if you record through the mike. It also enables you to 'feed in' incidental music to liven up your drills, interviews, etc.

### 4 *Ear-phone jack (and ear-phones!)*

This is essential for doing your preparation in the staffroom without disturbing the rest of the staff. You can play the tape as loudly as you like and nobody will hear.

Radios and cassette-recorders have other, purchasable, accessories which the serious advocate of AVA would probably want to employ, for example:

#### 1 *Programme distributor*

This is needed if you want to set up a small language laboratory. This gadget allows the students to listen only; they cannot record their responses as in the language laboratory.

An earphone-jack is plugged into the tape-recorder and the other end is plugged into the programme distributor. The distributor can have 8–12 outlets. Earphones are plugged into these outlets so that 8–12 children can listen to the programme quietly in one corner of the room.

#### 2 *Earphone plug adaptors*

Some electrical companies make a variety of different-sized adaptors for earphones.

There are also accessories which, though not essential, are worth knowing about:

#### 1 *Digital Random Programme Selector (D.R.P.S.)*

This gadget is very expensive and for this reason is not often used. It counts the number of exercises/sentences so that you can locate the one you want. A much cheaper 'substitute' is to count the sentences yourself by listening to the 'breaks' in the fast play back sound or by using the digital counter to note at which number each exercise starts.

#### 2 *Dolby*

This reduces noise and is used by serious music lovers. It is not really needed in the class except perhaps where classrooms are situated in high noise areas.

### **Use of the Cassette-recorder in Class**

Below is a listing of other types of material that can be usefully employed in the classroom:

1 Recordings made off-air: songs, advertisements, weather reports, talks, plays, stories, language teaching programmes, stories for listening comprehension or for reproduction, incidental music to liven up home-made programmes.

2 Commercial programmes: songs for language teaching, (e.g. *Mister Monday, Goodbye Rainbow, Cloud Songs, Sunday Afternoon*), exercises in listening comprehension, (e.g. *Listening Links*) and various language drills.

3 Home-made programmes: tongue twisters, recognition of sounds, interviews, simulated news, exercises on stress and intonation, substitution drills, dialogues, descriptions for composition work, listening comprehension passages, etc.

4 Recordings made by the students themselves inside or outside the classroom, e.g. dialogues, simulated interviews.

## Guidelines For Writing Oral-aural Exercises to be Recorded

- 1 The exercises should have a meaningful context.
- 2 The language should be authentic.
- 3 Humour should be included, where possible.
- 4 Each activity type should not exceed 5-10 minutes.
- 5 Each exercise should deal with one rule or structure only.
- 6 Sentences should be short.
- 7 A model sentence should always be given together with clear instructions, at the start of any activity.
- 8 Useful, 'functional' visuals – not just pretty embellishments – can be incorporated in the activity.
- 9 Incidental music in between exercises helps liven up the lesson and helps to keep the attention of students.

# WANTED

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# and listening

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