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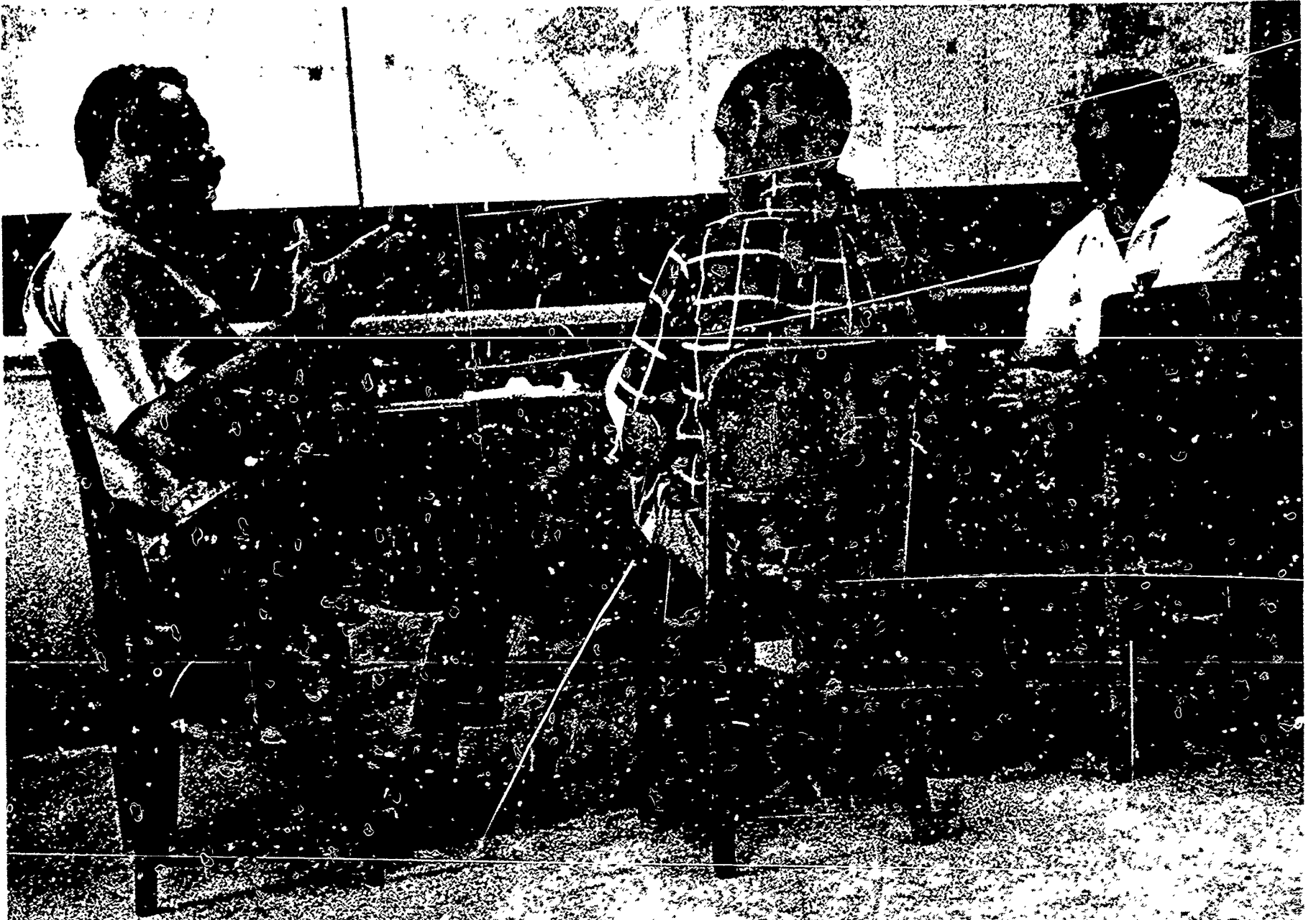
THE MEDIATED DIALOGUE, AN ACCOUNT OF THE EXPERIMENTAL
NATIONAL MEDIA INSTITUTES IN THE ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES.
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES
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TITLE 11, SPECIAL MEDIA INSTITUTES

SPECIAL MEDIA INSTITUTES HAVE FUNCTIONED IN THE YEARS
1965-6 AND 1966-7 TO BRING KNOWLEDGE OF EDUCATIONAL MEDIA USE
IN SPECIFIC SUBJECT AREAS TO TITLE XI NDEA INSTITUTE
DIRECTORS, AND TO ENCOURAGE MORE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
BETWEEN TEACHERS, SCHOLARS, AND STUDENTS. SPECIAL MEDIA
INSTITUTES HAVE BEEN HELD AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY, THE
TEACHING RESEARCH DIVISION OF THE OREGON STATE SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION, SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. SUBJECTS WERE ENGLISH, MODERN FOREIGN
LANGUAGES, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, LIBRARY SCIENCE, READING,
ECONOMICS, ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE, CIVICS, AND
DISADVANTAGED YOUTH. A BROAD SAMPLE OF EDUCATIONAL MEDIA
MATERIALS AND HARDWARE WERE AVAILABLE FOR USE BY INSTITUTE
ATTENDEES DURING THE WEEK-LONG 1966-7 SESSIONS, AS WELL AS
INFORMATION ON NEW TEACHING STRATEGIES, INNOVATIONS AND THEIR
APPLICATION, AND NEW TEXTS AVAILABLE. ALMOST 350 SUBJECT
INSTITUTE DIRECTORS ATTENDED THE SPECIAL MEDIA INSTITUTES AND
HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY REACHED AN ESTIMATED 13,000 TEACHERS. (BB)

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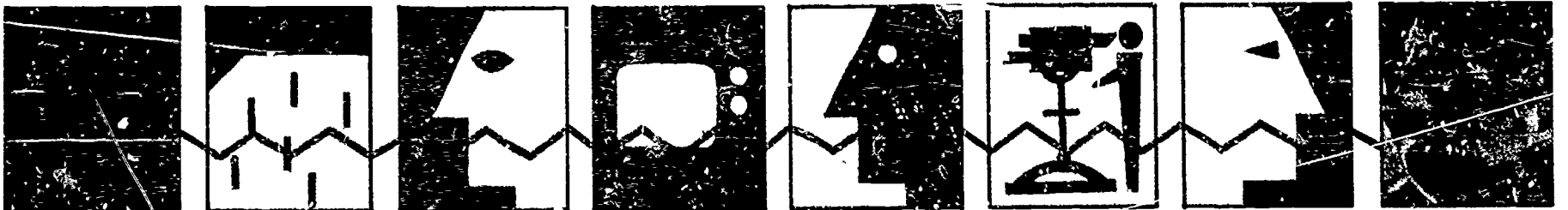
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THE MEDIATED
Dialogue



An Account of the Experimental National Media Institutes in the Academic Disciplines.

Introduction: THE BEGINNING

The beginnings of the successful penetration of outer space are but ten years behind us. During that complex and uncomfortable decade, great changes have taken place in American education. In the future, many others will become necessary and inevitable. Key to any achievement of consequence in the American educational system — key to any changes leading to constant improvement in educational quality, productivity, and relevance — is the process of educating teachers. It is with a phase of this process of teacher education that this report is concerned.

Title XI of the National Defense Education Act provided the authority and funds to establish institutes of many kinds for teachers in various academic disciplines and some functional teaching areas, such as the teaching of reading. The list of fields is long and important. It includes, as of 1967: Arts and Humanities, Civics, Counseling and Guidance, Disadvantaged Youth, Economics, Educational Media, English, English for Speakers of Other Languages, Geography, History, Industrial Arts, International Affairs, Modern Foreign Languages, and Reading.

Congress, in providing the authority for the institute

program, and the United States Office of Education, in setting up the guidelines, wanted to be sure that the practicing teacher — the teacher on the line in direct contact with students in the elementary and secondary schools — would be able to translate the difficult and new content of the academic disciplines into forms and processes that would help young people — whether from ghetto, suburb, or farm — to learn and to find that learning is valuable and exciting. That is where educational media came into the picture and a dialogue was begun.

The Office of Education guidelines, in effect, required that the programs of the subject-matter institutes attended by teachers provide information about and experiences with new educational media. The media component was needed to adapt a particular discipline into forms suitable for communication with children. This requirement touched the difficult problem of teacher education, particularly as it related to the knowledge explosion.

There are many sticky (and ancient) problems in teacher education. One of the most persistent has been the relationship between the disciplines or fields of instruction, such as history or biology, and the processes by which



... translating difficult content into forms and processes that help young people learn ...

these disciplines, painstakingly developed by scholars in the universities, may be made relevant and communicated to the school population by the teachers, who stand in the middle of the process. Many battles have been fought in the past over subject matter vs. method, between the promoters of the disciplines and those concerned with the mediation of instruction. As our knowledge of the world and of man increased astronomically, these conflicts more or less gave way to isolation, as each group, whether composed of geographers or learning psychologists, attempted to keep up with its own intellectual problems to the exclusion of the more generalized problems of education.

As the Title XI Institute program progressed, perspective on this problem began to be restored. What was needed was a new dialogue at a new level; the isolation between scholars and professional educators had to be broken down. Almost by accident, it turned out that the OE requirement (that the subject-matter institutes provide information to teachers on new media and materials) set the dialogue going.

The beginning of the dialogue can be found in the suggestion that the directors of subject matter institutes be given help with this requirement by the provision of short workshops or seminars covering the problems of mediation in their own disciplines. This suggestion, of course, required planning, and several planning conferences were called by the Division of Educational Personnel Training, U. S. Office of Education. These conferences brought together representatives of the learned societies and professionals from the educational media field. In these meetings the dialogue began its rapid spread. It has become an important exchange at several levels—university, learned society, and government—among people now concerned with the whole educational process.

The subject-matter disciplines are beginning to produce media experts from their own ranks — history is an example. At the same time, several experts in the field of educational media are becoming particularly specialized in those media and processes which are useful in communicating historical concepts.

The great beneficiaries of this kind of dialogue are obviously the children of the land. Partly as a result of the mediated dialogue, a large and growing number of students are being stimulated to approach classroom and subject matter with excitement, curiosity, and a desire to understand.

In the following sections, the details of the Special Media Institutes and the dialogue they generated can be seen in operation.



... educational media can help arouse curiosity and a desire to understand . . .

Prologue 1965-66: CONTACT & COOPERATION

What would be the best means of assuring the rapid spread of the dialogue? This was a question confronting the government, the learned societies, and the universities. After a series of discussions, representatives of these three interested areas met in Washington, D.C., for a thorough consideration of the problem from all points of view. Major learned societies represented at the Washington meeting were: the American Association of Geographers, the American Historical Association, the Department of Audio-Visual Instruction of the National Education Association, the International Reading Association, the Modern Language Association, and the National Council of Teachers of English. There were, as well, representatives of the United States Office of Education and several universities. Ultimately, agreement was reached on steps to be taken to advance the dialogue.

In full recognition of the serious communications gap between the increasing accumulation of difficult subject matter and the young people in the classrooms, the United States Office of Education arranged for the offering of short-term institutes, during the academic year 1965-66, to train directors of subject-matter institutes in the use of educational media in their own disciplines. The Office of Education entered into a contract with the University of Southern California to provide this training. Michigan State University and Syracuse University joined in the program, and thus an informal consortium

at the university level was created. Subject-matter areas represented in the new institutes at the three universities were English, Modern Foreign Languages, Geography, History, Library Science, and Reading. These short-term institutes were called *Special Media Institutes* (SMI)—*special* because each was related to a given discipline, *media* because educational media were to play significant roles in each institute.

For the first time in a structured national program of this kind, subject-matter specialists joined forces with media specialists in an effort to make resources of modern instructional technology available to the teaching profession. Their purpose: to help teachers find new and more effective channels of communication with students. This initial effort was exploratory and rough, but it promoted a lively and productive interchange of ideas and information among director-trainees, media staff, and other faculty assisting as subject-matter consultants.

One hundred and twenty NDEA Institute Directors attended the short-term institutes and have subsequently carried the media-message to an estimated 4,000 or more teachers. Reaction from the participants, both upon completion of these initial Special Media Institutes and following the 1966 summer NDEA Institutes, was highly encouraging. Continuation and expansion of the program were the next logical steps.



... SMI help to encourage the discovery of new and more effective channels of communication ...

Dialogue 1966-67: THE BLENDING OF DISCIPLINES

The expanded SMI offered in 1967 under the aegis of the United States Office of Education were each one week long. A total of 227 director-trainees attended, and these have, in turn, reached an estimated 9,000 or more teachers through NDEA Institutes. There were four participating institutions in the 1966-67 SMI.

INSTITUTION	SPECIAL MEDIA INSTITUTE HELD
Michigan State University	Economics (2) Geography
Teaching Research Division, Oregon State System of Higher Education	Modern Foreign Languages English (as a second language)
Syracuse University	Civics History (3)
University of Southern California	Reading (2) English (3) Disadvantaged Youth (2)

Objectives and Approach

While the SMI offered by the four participating institutions varied in format and content details, they were much alike in objectives and approach. Well in advance of the expanded SMI in November of 1966, every director of a 1967 summer NDEA Institute received a brochure declaring SMI objectives. In brief, the objectives were:

To communicate to the director-trainee and to his institute participants a thorough appreciation of the innovations in educational media and a reasonable facility in making applications of them in teaching.

To bring director-trainees into immediate and meaningful contact with the newest and most useful teaching strategies, with the latest texts in relevant fields, and with other educational media.

To foster a vital intellectual exchange among all the participants.

To demonstrate outstanding examples of educational innovation through media — such as a self-contained learning laboratory.

Participants in each Institute also received detailed statements of purpose to help them see more clearly the ways in which media could advance teaching in their own disciplines. The participants were helped to feel fully part of the SMI program even before their arrival by a series of pre-Institute letters and then by personal contact between SMI staff and director-trainees as soon

as they reached the airport or other place of arrival. The director-trainees were given informative literature prepared for the SMI to strengthen their orientation. And their attention was repeatedly focused on innovation in teaching by the concentrated atmosphere of the Institutes — an atmosphere that was 90% media — but, should we say, *disciplined* media.

In a variety of ways, it was regularly emphasized that the teacher's ultimate task is to communicate and that modern technological media are an excellent means. The SMI sought to show the director-trainees how to extend the teacher's capabilities by giving him the modern tools to fulfill his potential and to make his knowledge relevant.

Throughout the Institutes, the effort was to immerse the director-trainees in an exciting atmosphere dominated by media — by the presentation of media applications, experiments with media, discussions of media, and trips to particularly enlightened places of media use (such as the Experimental Reading Center in San Bernardino County; the public schools of Bellevue, Washington; the Newhouse Communication Center at Syracuse; and Michigan State University's Closed-Circuit TV facility). Creating the right kind of environment required key ingredients. In order of importance, these ingredients were: inspiration and imagination in the presentation of educational media; time for discussion; and time for independent activity.



... educational media -- modern tools to fulfill the teacher's potential ...

Software, Hardware, and People

Every effort was made to provide participants with a broad sample of materials in their disciplines. These included: printed programmed units and manuals, photographs, film in all forms, overhead projection, transparencies, audio and video recordings, and closed-circuit and broadcast television programs.

Hardware of all kinds was also available to the participants. Generally, they were provided with study carrels containing audio channels, headsets, and projection screens. In some Institutes, there were language laboratory consoles and automated control lecterns. Participants were provided as much information as possible about existing instructional materials in their subject-matter fields and about obtaining such materials for their own institutes. The director-trainees eventually were pursuing with enthusiasm the development of some proficiency with various kinds of equipment. The important aspect of familiarization with equipment, however, was not the degree of skill developed but the degree of appreciation of educational media's potential in reshaping and re-energizing the teaching-learning process.

Through frequent experience with these modern facilities, the director-trainees discovered new means of dealing with today's teaching problems and tomorrow's.

Guiding the director-trainees from one discovery to another were the resource-teams of each SMI. By and large, these teams consisted of: the regular SMI staff of each participating institution that worked with all groups of participants in all content areas; the subject-matter consultants who were highly knowledgeable in media while expert in a particular content area and who were responsible for the program in that content area; and, consultant lecturers from a variety of disciplines who were responsible for limited segments of an institute. The media staffs were fully competent within their field, and the subject-matter consultants and the consultant lecturers were distinguished either academically or professionally or both.



... SMI provide a full array of facilities for instructional purposes ...



Response

How well did the Special Media Institutes get the job done? In order to answer this question, the various Institutes have held evaluation sessions and have sought further information through informal instruments and site visitations. The overall reaction to the SMI by each director contacted after his SMI attendance has been highly laudatory. The following are a few representative responses from directors who participated in Special Media Institutes:

"This experience offered many new avenues of exploration to me . . . I was not a stranger to the field of media . . . having always been interested in the possibilities of facilitating the educational process through the unique methods offered by media. But I must confess that I had slipped considerably behind what is being offered by modern technologists in this field."

"Our NDEA group, as their workshop activity, is making a series of televised lessons on language and literature."

"I gained a great deal of knowledge and acquired a number of ideas on how to use special media in my institute for this summer. Already we have begun to utilize some of the information that you gave us."

"We are using our video-recorders and closed-circuit TV to tremendous advantage. We are putting all types of experience on video tape. We are also making 8mm films, slides, and filmstrips. I bought \$1,500.00 of camera equipment, most of which you demonstrated to me."

"I have not only been impressed with what I have learned to help me in my field but I have also learned about how to handle an Institute in such a way that Faculty and Participants really interact and share . . ."

"We gave an assignment of a media project . . . All 36 were tremendous. Practically everyone had something ranging from samples of their children's work to 16mm and 8mm films. The project was so successful . . . we were swamped by abundance."

"In putting together the program for this year's institute, I took particular care to use media as much as possible. I have even indoctrinated two of my instructors to the point where they are using some kind of audio-visual equipment almost daily in their classes. Of course, the composition teacher has found the overhead projector very useful, and the language instructor has been using the overhead projector and the machines quite a bit."



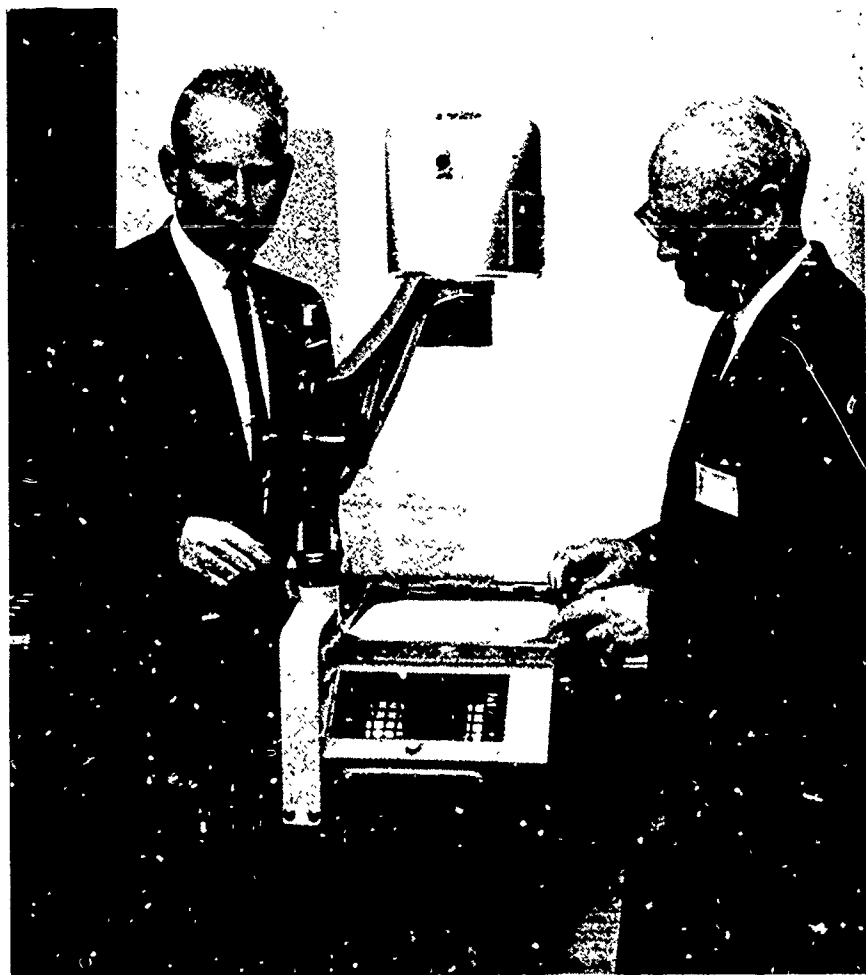
. . . intellect challenged by technology has shown intense interest . . .



"I consider the Institute a professional shot in the arm. I certainly hope that institute directors will continue to have opportunities to benefit from further institutes of this kind."

"The best possible way to spread research, new ideas, etc., as broadly as possible. I'll get double value because in addition to the summer institute, I'm running a state conference for foreign language teachers in two weeks."

"It seems to me that what I came away from Los Angeles with was a deepened concern for strategies for harnessing the technology to serve our ends There will be, at least, one debate in the institute at Brooklyn College on this topic this summer."



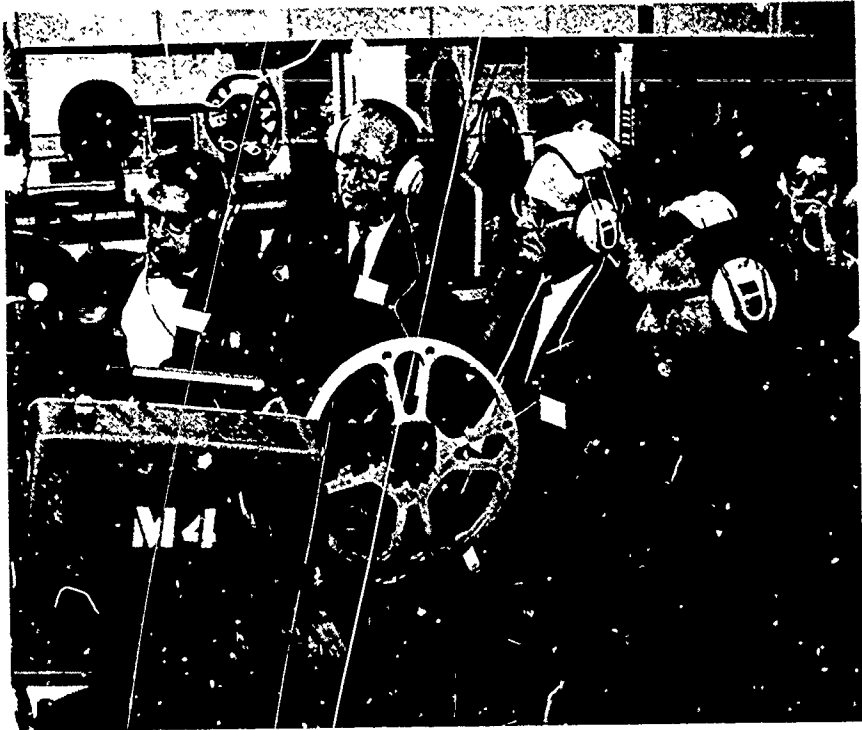
"All in all the experience of last March was very good for me, and its effects have not yet worn off. I find myself engaging more and more in conversation with colleagues about the use of media in the classroom. I know I will be utilizing a number of audio-visual approaches in my own class this coming fall, and I am very sure that my teaching assistants will benefit from the useful experience which I had with you."

"Excited as I was during the March 13-17 institutes, what I learned takes on more meaning and importance every day. The full force of just how much my vision has been broadened struck me last Friday when I talked with a class in 'Trends in the Teaching of English' about ideas presented at the institute. Frankly, I used your summary as a starting point, working back from it, and I found myself enthusiastically advocating some of the things I questioned in Los Angeles."

These and all other highly favorable responses from NDEA Institute Directors closely correspond to the general findings of site visit evaluations carried out by the SMI national office. At all NDEA Institute sites visited, there was strong evidence that information and ideas from SMI were being used and communicated.

More important, however, is the increase in the breadth and depth of the discipline-media dialogue. This dialogue is now lively and self-generating. And it carries new ideas in both directions.





... and the dialogue goes on ...

Epilogue: THE DIALOGUE GOES ON

SMI and the mediated dialogue are quite obviously not alone in trying to improve the nature and quality of education. But thus far, they appear to be important additions to the forces for educational improvement. Because the SMI approach stresses *doing* and offers concrete examples, it is highly attractive to the professor and to the teacher at other educational levels. In a unique and interesting way, Special Media Institutes have given some command of technology directly to hundreds of professors and indirectly to thousands of teachers so that they can create new and better educational environments for the children of the land. At the same time, the integrity of the disciplines has been carried down the line.

Because of what has been done already through SMI, there will likely always be a growing exchange of ideas, a combining of energy, and a cooperation in pursuit of educational goals between media and subject-matter specialists. The seeds of inspiration have been sown; the fires of curiosity have been lit. Intellects challenged by technology have shown intense interest and no inclination to retreat.

But while the natural spread of media involvement in the educational process is not in question, there is the question of speed in application. The more teachers who can be involved in the dialogue with media specialists, the more students who will benefit from tremendously enriched educational experiences.

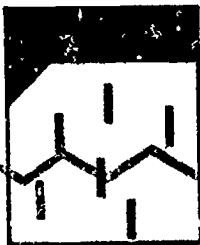




National Special Media Institutes
Department of Instructional Technology
School of Education
University of Southern California



*subject
matter*



*subject-matter
specialist*



media



*media
specialist*



*NDEA Summer
Institute*



*the
teacher*



*the
student*

