



## Editor's Corner

**New French Film Series:** The National Instructional Television Center has announced the availability of a new television series for use by high schools and colleges. This series of twenty-six 15-minute programs was produced in France by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and is entitled EN FRANCAIS. The films are available in full color or black-and-white and previews of representative lessons may be obtained by contacting the National Instructional Television office nearest you.

**Videotape Playback of Spanish Dialogs:** The Spanish-Portuguese Department of the University of Texas has developed a new technique for teaching Spanish dialogs via television. A description of the methods used may be found in the September 1970 issue of *Educational/Instructional Broadcasting*.

**Commentary by Cassette:** Prof. Robert J. Moffat of Stanford University has come up with a new technique which not only helps in grading student papers but lends a personal voice to the process

He dictates his comments into a taperecorder cassette which the student later plays back.

Prof. Moffat has two thermoscience classes of about 50 students. Each student has his own numbered cassette which he picks up after he has handed in his report, exam, or term paper. He then plays back the cassette on one of two class tape-recorders.

"The taped commentary," explains Prof. Moffat, "helps me to do a better job on report evaluation. It takes about the same time as before to grade a report (30 to 40 minutes) but now more than half the time is spent in direct communication with the student. *I'm not just writing notes or criticisms in the margins.* I'm illustrating the faults of a paper by quoting at length from the student's own work as well as pinpointing specific errors. It's a much more satisfactory and personal approach."

Of 32 Moffat students asked to comment on the value of the tape cassettes, 31 were "very enthusiastic" and one was "indifferent."

Six other Stanford professors in Moffat's mechanical engineering department have already adopted the cassette commentary system. It is also spreading to other colleges and universities.

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The same technique described by Professor Moffat above has also been used successfully by Robert Phillips in the correction of written home work. His article describing this technique, entitled "Using the Tape Recorder to Correct Student Compositions," appeared in *Hispania* 51(1):126-27; 1968 and bears reading by anyone interested in the use of media in language teaching. (Flint Smith)

Dear Editor:

"The Language Laboratory: A Relic of the Past or Solution to the Future" by Pierre J. Capretez (NALLD Journal Vol. IV No. 1) is an excellent analysis of the many mistakes made in the design and use of language laboratories.

The assesment of the need for individual student recorders, however, overlooks one of the main reasons for their presence in a language laboratory: placing control of the program in the hands of the student who is using it. Certainly most teachers and laboratory personnel would now agree that the provision for recording a student's voice for later "self analysis" is secondary. Removing the recorder, however, or not allowing one to be installed in the first place, would defeat the major advantage of self pacing provided by having one at each booth. In labs which are fully equipped with these recorders a teacher might advise only occasional listening to the recorded student track and more time spent in active participation with the recorded program material.

On balance, the student recorder and its ability to provide true self pacing is still a valuable addition to a language laboratory.

*Gary J. Ambert — Director of Language Laboratories, East Carolina University.*

*Cassette Deck Evaluation:* The November 1970 edition of *Stereo Review* has an interesting and informative evaluation of seventeen cassette decks. Technical and operational features of the decks are discussed in detail by Mr. Julian Hirsch of Hirsch-Houck Laboratories.