



Materials Review

COLOR VIDEO TAPES, German Phonetics, an Audiovisual Learning Program; UW-P Productions, University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Kenosha, Wis. 53140. (10 Color video tapes, 1/2 inch or 1 inch reels, or 3/4 inch cassettes, approximately 30 minutes each, including Testbook, 32 pages.) Created by Harry A. Walbruck, with Gerhard Rauscher, consultant, for the advanced beginner and intermediate level of German. Prices available on request from UW-P Media Productions. (Summer 1976.)

A new self-pacing approach to improving and/or perfecting pronunciation in German has been applied in a Learning Program which can be used in the classroom or for independent study. Its declared goal is that by comparing the German with the American-English sound system, the student will become more competent in his oral mastery of German.

Various audiovisual techniques are applied in the series of ten Units which comprise the curriculum of the Learning Program. The instructor on video tape who introduces the individual sound and speech patterns of German is assisted by an American and by a German who demonstrates the examples for each sound explained. In most cases, the student watching the demonstrations is directed to imitate the speakers; then a repeat demonstration is given, whereupon the student, after checking his Pronunciation against the model, is called upon to repeat the words or expressions once more.

Some of the positions of the mouth, lips, and tongue with relations to the teeth and other parts of the mouth to produce German sounds are first shown on colored charts. By combining the charts and other visual aids with the corresponding sound, the total impact on the learner is much greater than achieved by listening to tapes alone. Short tests are built into each Unit, each structured in such a way that only after the student shows mastery of the basic concepts can he study the succeeding lesson. Students thus are "paced" through the curriculum in consonance with the relative ease or difficulty with which they master the material.

Compared to more conventional courses in German Phonetics, given by one instructor in the classroom, the most obvious advantage of the Audiovisual Learning Program is the constant availability of several speakers for model. An added asset is the high degree of flexibility in which the video tapes can be used. Initial try-outs with a mixed group of five

Material Review

students, three of whom were in their second and two in their third year of German, resulted in the following evaluation: four had no difficulties in following the instructions (which afterwards were modified so that the percentage became 100); all participants understood the examples; only one had any difficulty in understanding and responding to the tests; two had to study parts of the Learning Program more than once in order to be able to continue to subsequent parts.

The ability to restudy portions of the curriculum seems most significant; it confirms the true nature of a program tailored to individual learning at one's own pace. The entire series is of a high professional quality; sound and picture are always sharp and clear. Its only drawback seems to be that it can only be utilized in colleges and high schools which have the necessary video tape or cassette playback facilities.

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