

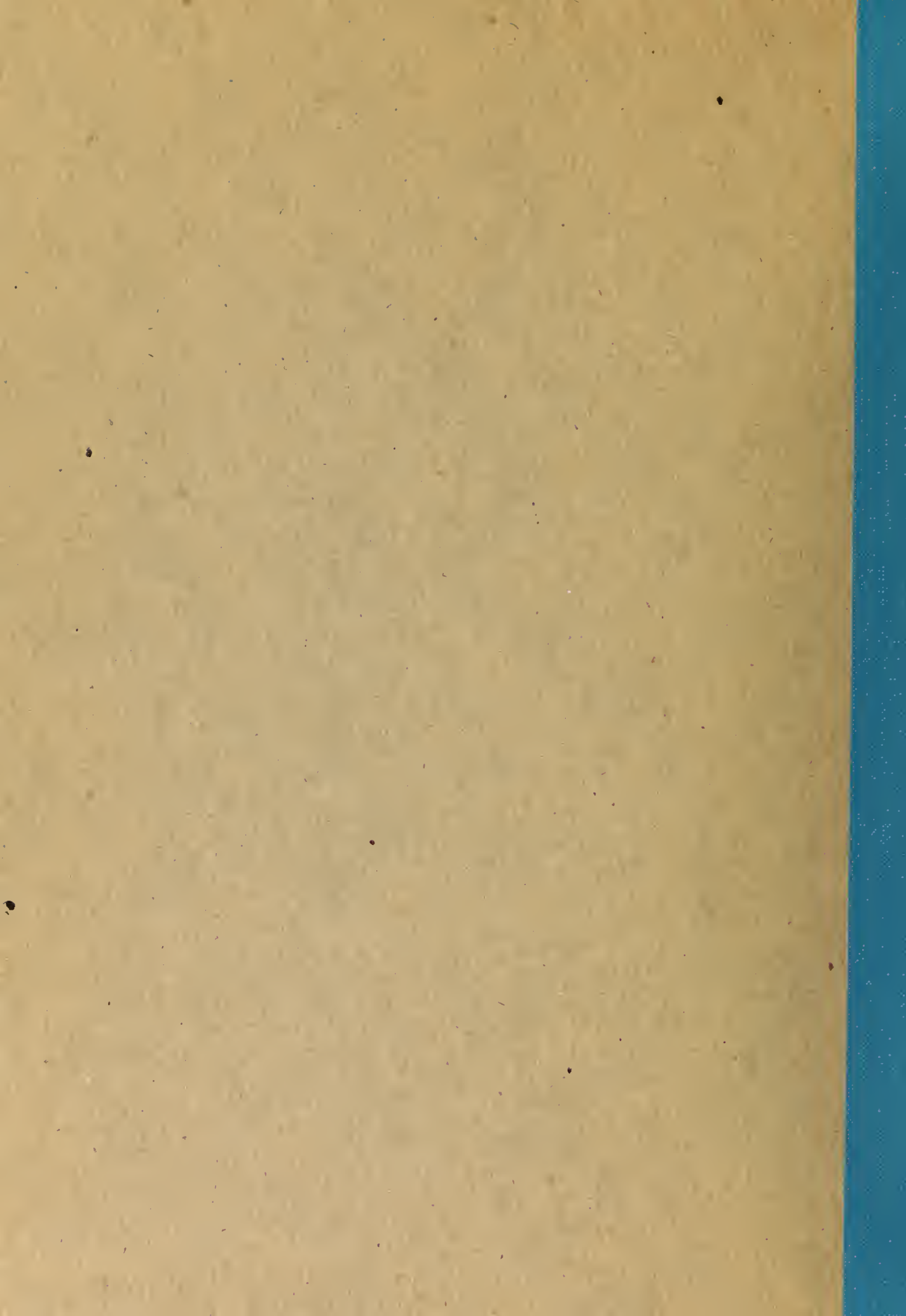
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Curriculum Guide
for
Secondary School

FRENCH



Department of Education
Edmonton, Alberta
September, 1968

Acknowledgement

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The Secondary French Committee operated under the guidance of the Senior High School Curriculum Committee.

NOTE:

This Curriculum Guide is a service publication only. The Senior High School Program of Studies contains the official statement concerning the course. The information in the Guide is prescriptive insofar as the content duplicates that given in the Program of Studies; however, the Curriculum Guide contains, as well as content, methods of developing the content, suggestions for the use of teaching aids, and additional reference books.



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C U R R I C U L U M G U I D E

for

Secondary School

F R E N C H

PART I

I INTRODUCTION

The world's evolved natural languages are immeasurably complex. To gain an ability to understand, speak, read, and write even one's native tongue is a long, arduous, and continuing task. To learn a foreign language well enough that it may be of practical use, that special satisfaction and pleasure may be gained from its use, that the cultural values of another country might be appreciated, is also a long and exacting task.

II TRENDS

Secondary schools on this continent are feeling the impact of a renaissance in the study of languages. There is a growing conviction that, if language programs are to be offered in a worthwhile way, they must begin early and they must begin orally. There is, therefore, a trend to offer languages in elementary schools to provide for early learning of some basic audio-lingual skills, enrichment of the school program, and stimulation to further language study.

Reasons for increased interest in the spoken language include the mobility of people through improved modes of transportation and the use of mass media of communication. The research findings of linguistic scientists have also been a factor in the trend to attach greater importance to acquisition of the new language through the ear, especially in the early stages of language learning.

Another development which is having an impact on language study in our schools is the variety of aids now available. Publishing houses are producing an impressive array of audio-lingual aids for the teacher of languages, including charts, recordings, films, and filmstrips. The language laboratory adds a new dimension, as does television.

III AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The general aim of the program is that the students develop the ability to understand, speak, read, and write the language as well as possible in the time available, and assimilate, along with the language, some knowledge and appreciation of the culture, history, customs, and traditions of French-speaking peoples.

Specific Objectives

The specific objective of a program in French is the acquiring of proficiency in the language skills. To do so, the student should develop the ability to:

- A. understand French as it is spoken by a native-speaker,
- B. speak French in everyday situations with reasonable fluency and correctness,
- C. read everyday French easily and with comprehension,
- D. communicate in writing anything he can say.

IV RECOMMENDED TEXTS

The following materials have been recommended for use in the six-year sequential program as well as for the three-year senior high school program (Fr. 7,8,9,11,21,31, and Fr. 10,20,30).

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. <u>AUDIO-LINGUAL MATERIALS</u> | Longmans, Canada Limited 55 Barber Greene Road Don Mills, Ontario |
| 2. <u>AURAL-ORAL FRENCH SERIES</u> | Holt, Rinehart & Winston Canada Ltd. 833 Oxford Street Toronto 18, Ontario |
| 3. <u>VOIX ET IMAGES DE FRANCE</u> | Marcel Didier (Canada) Limited 1442 McGill College Avenue Montreal 2, Quebec |

The texts currently authorized, Le Français Vivant, New Junior French, and Premières Années de Français, will be discontinued in French 10 in June, 1969 and in French 20 in June, 1970.

The new materials have been recommended for French 30 for September, 1969, and it is expected that Senior French will be discontinued in June, 1971.

V. COURSE CONTENT

A. THE SIX YEAR PROGRAM - i.e. FRENCH 7, 8, 9, 11, 21, 31

| | <u>Audio-Lingual Materials</u> (A-L M) | <u>Audio-Oral French Series</u> (A.O.S.) | <u>Voix et Images de France</u> (V.I.F.) |
|-------|--|--|---|
| FR.7 | Units 1 - 5 French-Level One | Lessons 1 - 5 Ecouter et Parler | Lessons 1 - 5 Premier Degré |
| FR.8 | Units 6 - 10 French-Level One | Lessons 6 - 10 Ecouter et Parler | Lessons 6 - 10 Premier Degré |
| FR. 9 | Units 11 - 14 French-Level One | Lessons 11 - 15 Ecouter et Parler | Lessons 11 - 15 Premier Degré |
| FR.11 | Units 15 - 22 French-Level Two Lessons 23 - 24 French-Level Three | Lessons 16 - 20 Ecouter et Parler Lessons 1 - 2 Parler et Lire | Lessons 16 - 25 Premier Degré |
| FR.21 | Units 25 - 33 French-Level Three | Lessons 3 - 9 Parler et Lire | Lessons 26 - 32 + 3 supplementary readers chosen from the 1500 word category of the <u>Lire et Savoir</u> Series |
| FR.31 | Units 34 - 40 French-Level Four | Lessons 10 - 14 Parler et Lire + 2 lessons Lire, Parler et Ecrire | Lessons 1 - 4 Deuxième Degré + supplementary reading |

B. THE THREE YEAR PROGRAM i.e. FRENCH 10, 20, 30

| | | | |
|-------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| FR.10 | Units 1 - 14 French-Level One | Lessons 1 - 10 Ecouter et Parler | Lessons 1 - 10 Premier Degré |
| FR.20 | Units 15 - 22 French-Level Two | Lessons 11 - 20 Ecouter et Parler | Lessons 11 - 21 Premier Degré |
| FR.30 | Units 23 - 33 French-Level Three | Lessons 1 - 7 Parler et Lire | Lessons 22 - 32 Premier Degré |

NOTE:

1. Only those students who have successfully completed the minimum of time required in FRENCH 7,8,9 or their equivalent may register in FRENCH 11.
2. The content of FRENCH 30 and FRENCH 31 for 1969-70 is tentative and has not yet been approved.
3. Either FRENCH 21 or FRENCH 30 is a prerequisite of FRENCH 31.
4. Students who complete FRENCH 21 will be eligible to write the matriculation examination in FRENCH 30 if they so desire and will receive credit in either one or the other in one year depending on their choice.
5. No student may earn more than twenty credits in high school FRENCH.

VI APPROACH TO SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Researchers in the field of second language learning during the past fifteen years are almost unanimous in advocating an increasing emphasis on an audio-lingual approach to language teaching. Vast amounts of scientific literature now have accumulated to support such an approach in second language programs which are intended to prepare students both for communicative experiences and for the later acquisition of the skills of reading and writing.

In the initial stages of the audio-lingual method the materials consist of dialogues to be learned as a basis for actual communicative activities. It is emphasized that learning these basic dialogues does not mean merely memorizing. Rather, it means learning them in such a way as to make them usable in a context as close as possible to real life. This implies the learning of variations within the basic patterns as well as transposing the situation presented in the dialogue into the context of the student's life.

In the later stages reading and writing are introduced after much practice of audio-oral exercises has been effected in the classroom and continued outside the classroom by means of tapes and records.

Because the goal of second language learning is the acquisition of skills which result in fluency within the range of the vocabulary and the structures learned, it is proposed that the content of the three-year program, i.e. French 10, 20 and 30, include the vocabulary and the grammatical constructions of Le Français Fondamental, Premier Degré. It is further proposed that the content of the six year program include the words and the grammatical constructions found in Le Français Fondamental, Premier Degré, with some supplementary material.

An audio-lingual approach to the learning of a second language requires frequent practice. As in the development of any skill, it is not possible for a student to become competent in the use of a second language unless he hears it often and is encouraged to speak it frequently. In most cases, regardless of the educational level of the language aptitude of the student, continuous exposure to frequently used patterns will permit the student to express himself with some degree of fluency in the new language. The present mobility of population along with trade and cultural opportunities require a re-evaluation of the objectives of second language learning to include students who do not intend to enter university.

The approach preferred and the materials chosen by teachers are important only in so far as they permit a method which strives to attain on the part of the students a complete mastery of frequently used words, patterns and structures. This emphasis on the complete mastery of selected items does not suggest that students be encouraged to memorize lists of unrelated words nor that they be forced to learn theoretical and highly abstract grammatical concepts. It does, on the other hand, require that these students be presented acceptable language patterns in many different situations utilizing the words and grammatical concepts contained in Le Français Fondamental.

The decision to select authorized or alternate materials should be made in the light of whether a particular teacher can, with the materials chosen, implement a program in French which will lead eventually to the achievement of the stated goals. The subject matter of each individual program is thus made subordinate to the learning of the French language in a manner consistent with the objectives of second language learning.

When such a program has been implemented, it will become possible to evaluate student achievement in terms of the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills developed over a period of three years. Thus the emphasis will be on the development of fluency and the ability to communicate rather than upon a mere accumulation of credits.

It is suggested that teachers make frequent use of Le Français Fondamental* in the preparation of exercises and tests, that the use of French-English dictionaries be discontinued, and that the use of the French-English vocabulary in the textbooks be discouraged. The Dictionnaire Fondamental* by Gougenheim is a good dictionary for students who are beginning to read and write. With some advanced students, teachers might prefer to encourage the use of Larousse des Débutants.

In many school systems in Alberta, the three-year program in French will be for many students the only second language program available. It is necessary, therefore, that it remain a program acceptable to students continuing toward university studies. The goals, however, remain the same; fluency within the range of structures and vocabulary learned. Such fluency, at the Grade XII level includes the writing and reading of material in which the student has achieved oral fluency.

*available from: Marcel Didier (Canada) Ltd.,
1442 McGill College Avenue,
Montreal 2, Quebec.

VII EVALUATION

It is essential that evaluation be in terms of the objectives of the program. Since the first year is almost entirely oral, testing will consist of attempts to measure the pupils' ability to identify the sounds and words they hear, to understand the meaning of what they hear, to be able to pronounce French with reasonable accuracy, and to make themselves understood in French. There will be little formal testing at stage. As reading and writing are added to the program, they too will have to be tested, and more formal tests will be added as time goes by.

Guidelines

1. French should be used exclusively, both in the questions themselves, and in the directions.
2. Questions should be straightforward and simply constructed. The purpose of the test is to find out what the pupil knows, not how often he can be tricked into giving the wrong answer.
3. Habit-formation is the goal in language learning, so nearly all questions should be such that a native-speaker would know the correct answer instantly. Tests should be neither puzzles nor intellectual exercises.
4. Each item should be designed to test only one thing; e.g. the pupil who knows the correct answer but mispronounces it deserves a higher mark than the pupil who does not know the answer at all, so these two aspects should be kept separate.
5. The pupil should be required to answer each question quickly to reduce the possibility of translation and to test for the automatic response which is the goal.
6. Composition is an integral part of the program in later stages, but is not a very satisfactory test item. Care should be taken in the use of this type of question.
7. A test also serves as a learning situation. The French used in the test and expected in the answers should be correct and meaningful. Complete sentences or ideas should be used whenever possible, while testing of isolated grammatical rules should be avoided.

VIII EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

1. Filmstrip projector and daylight screen (for V.I.F. and Parler et Lire)
2. Tape recorder with stand and extension speaker

It is recommended that both projector and recorder be equipped with remote control switch to reduce loss of teaching time.

IX MATERIALS REQUIREDA. AUDIO-LINGUAL MATERIALS

1. Classroom tapes or records
2. Student practice records (1 set per student)
3. Listening-comprehension testing tape set
4. Dialogue posters
5. Teacher's cue cards

B. AURAL-ORAL FRENCH SERIES

- *1. Programmed tapes (22 reels, including tests)
2. Album of disc recordings (1 per student)
3. Flash cards
4. Display photographs (Parler et Lire)
5. Filmstrips (with tapes, booklet, review tapes) (Ecouter et Parler)
6. Projectuals
7. Tape recordings (2 lessons of Lire, Parler and Ecrire, Fr. 31)

C. VOIX ET IMAGES DE FRANCE

1. Filmstrips - Premier Degré (32 lessons)
- *2. Classroom tapes - Premier Degré
3. Student records
4. Tapes (Phonétique)
5. Tapes (Structural Exercises)
6. Classroom tapes (Lessons 1 - 4 Deuxième Degré, Fr.31)

* Arrangements have been made to have these classroom tapes duplicated by the Audio-Visual Services branch of the Department of Education.

X STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' TEXTSA. AUDIO-LINGUAL MATERIALS

Each Level - 1, 2 and/or 3

1. Student text
2. Student tests
3. Teacher's manual

B. AURAL-ORAL FRENCH SERIESEcouter et Parler

1. Student text
2. Livre d'Exercices
3. Student tests
4. Student quizzes
5. Teacher's edition

Parler et Lire

1. Student text
2. Student workbook
3. Teacher's edition

Lire, Parler et Ecrire

1. Student text
2. Teacher's edition

C. VOIX ET IMAGES DE FRANCE

Premier Degré

1. Livre d'Images
2. Teaching With Voix et Images de France
3. Supplement to Teaching With Voix et Images de France
4. Script - V.I.F. Premier Degré
5. Exercices Pour Le Laboratoire de Langues
6. Textes Pour Etudiants (beginning Lesson 11)

Deuxieme Degré

1. Teacher's Guide

It is suggested that, for all programmes, the teacher have a copy of Le Français Fondamental for use in the construction of supplementary exercises and tests.

XI A GUIDE FOR THOSE WISHING TO PURCHASE A LANGUAGE LABORATORY

Here is a suggested procedure:

1. Make sure that a language laboratory will fulfill a purpose in your school. A laboratory means a new approach to the teaching of a second language. It means an oral approach to language. It means stressing the spoken word, knowing something about the phonetics, phonemics and intonation of the language. It also means a new form of programming of material to be used in conjunction with the ordinary classroom type of teaching. A language laboratory can be of great help to a teacher of languages, but a teacher must spend some time studying about it before ever attempting to use one.
2. Such study could well be organized on a local basis. Before deciding to buy a laboratory, purchase the books which are listed below. Study these books, individually or in a workshop. Once this has been done, then report to your superintendent and discuss the problem with him. You will probably find that such a study will make the task easier for all concerned.
3. If you decide to buy a language laboratory for your school, call in representatives from the various electronic companies in the field. A number of these companies have representatives in Alberta. They are listed below.

NOTE: The handling of the equipment is simple. Any teacher can perform all of the operations required. The essential point to consider is whether or not you, as a teacher, are prepared to adapt your teaching methods to this new form of teaching. The machine will relieve you of much of the work, but it will perform its task only if you, as a teacher, know the teaching procedures which apply in the language laboratory, and if you are prepared to use them.

XII INFORMATION ABOUT LANGUAGE LABORATORIES

NOTE: Prices are subject to change

A. BULLETINS

The Language Laboratory. Modern foreign languages in high school. United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education. 1961. For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, United States Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C. Price (U.S. \$.35).

Contents:

1. Planning for language laboratories.
2. Methods and materials for the laboratory.
3. Evaluating and selecting equipment.
4. Equipment in relation to student learning.
5. Operating language laboratories (scheduling, administrative duties, teaching techniques, testing and evaluating language laboratory uses).

This bulletin is a must for teachers and anyone planning a laboratory.

Foreign Languages Laboratories in Schools and Colleges.
United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare.
Same address as above. Price \$.40. 1960.

Contents:

1. Number, location and growth of language laboratories.
2. Purpose.
3. Organization and administration.
4. Equipment and costs.
5. Materials and techniques.
6. Evaluation.

This bulletin covers a wider field than the first. An interesting account of the growth of laboratories is given. A useful bulletin for both administrators and teachers.

B. The following books are valuable as guides for teachers using the laboratory.

The Language Laboratory and Modern Language Teaching.
Edward H. Stack. Oxford University Press. 1960. \$3.25.

Contents: Construction of aural-oral drills, types and patterns of oral drills. The language laboratory. Tape library and student routine. Laboratory administration. This is a complete course on language laboratory use. A must for teachers using one.

Sound Language Teaching. The State of the Art Today.

J.S. Halton, P.E. King, G. Mathieu, K.S. Pond. University Publishers, New York, 59 East 54 Street, New York 22, New York. 1961. Contains 46 chapters with all kinds of information about the laboratory, teaching methods, administration, etc., with 37 illustrations such as: layout for school, space, and a list of charts. It also answers one hundred questions about labs and gives a bibliography and glossary. Teachers are advised to study this manual. Price about \$5.50.

Audio-Visual Techniques in Teaching Foreign Languages.

Theodore Huebner, N.Y., University Press, 1960 . Price \$3.30. This is a complete course in the use of audio-visual aids in the classroom. It covers the whole field. Teachers who run out of inspiration in their work would get a complete methodology of audio-visual aids and their use from this book. It includes a very interesting bibliography covering the whole field of second language teaching.

C. Laboratory equipment may be purchased from the following:

Dictaphone Dictaphone Corporation
17th Avenue S.W.
Calgary, Alberta

Dage-Bell Canadian Electronics
109 Street - 107 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta

Electronic Teaching Laboratories Washington, D.C.
Canadian Office:
3077 Bathurst Street
Toronto, Ontario

Linguatrainer Stark Fine Instruments
Stark Electronic Sales Co.
Ajax, Ontario
Jasper Place:
Mobile Laboratory in trailer available

Rheem Califone Sharp's Theatre Supplies Ltd.
104 - 4th Street S.W.
Calgary, Alberta

Switchcraft Sharp's Theatre Supplies Ltd.
First Avenue - 4 Street S.W.
Calgary, Alberta

AURAL-ORAL TESTING IN THE CLASSROOM

PART II

I INTRODUCTION

With the renewed emphasis in modern language teaching on what may be called the "oral" skills - listening and speaking -- it has become necessary to re-examine the whole matter of student testing in the field of modern languages. In the past, when the major emphasis in language courses was placed on the reading or writing of the language, teachers were able, with considerable justification, to devote the greater part of their testing time to an evaluation of student achievement in these two areas. The fact that almost all the marks on a given test were assigned to reading and writing reflected the time devoted to developing these two skills in class.

Now that oral skills have come back into their own, it would seem only just to apply the same reasoning to the assignment of marks to these skills as well. A safe rule might be that the amount of time spent in class in the development of a particular skill should be reflected in the mark weight assigned to testing the same skill on examinations. Thus if we spend forty per cent of our time in promoting the ability to speak the language, forty per cent of the final mark should be assigned to this area.

To aid in assessing speaking ability in the second language, the following suggestions are offered for use both with and without a language laboratory. It must be appreciated that access to a language laboratory which contains a reasonable number of recording positions will greatly simplify the problem of evaluation. Since it is appreciated that the majority of teachers do not have access to such installations, this brief outline will be devoted for the most part to the testing of aural-oral skills in the classroom.

II TESTING ORAL PRODUCTION

Objective tests of oral production in modern languages, otherwise known as speaking tests, have always been considered as extremely difficult to administer on anything even remotely approaching a grade-wide or even classroom-wide basis. The major hurdle in their use has been that of the sheer amount of time involved; teachers found that a ten-minute test of oral production ability multiplied by thirty children involved a minimum of five hours of actual pupil contact.

Recent developments in modern language teaching have shown that it is possible to devise reasonably efficient procedures for classroom testing of oral production ability. While it is true that such tests become more and more subjective as they become farther and farther removed from a standardized testing situation, a certain amount of objectivity can be established provided that the teacher carefully plans his or her approach to the problem well in advance.

(Teachers who wish to assess audio-lingual skills on a more formal basis, are referred to Appendix C which lists commercially-available programs).

In general, in our tests of oral production we are attempting to assess two aspects of it: pronunciation and fluency. Obviously both aspects can be evaluated in the same test, but for the greatest efficiency in an informal situation the teacher should evaluate the two skills separately.

III TESTING PRONUNCIATION

Tests that evaluate only pronunciation are of two types: tests with an oral stimulus and tests with a written stimulus. Each presents both advantages and problems. In the first type of test, the student hears a short sentence or phrase which he is asked to repeat. (The sentence or phrase must be no more than seven syllables long, or the test becomes a memory exercise, and will invalidate the results). With this type of test the problem that arises is that while the student may have an excellent pronunciation, he may have very poor comprehension, and hence will not be able to repeat what has been said. The advantage of the test is that the student is completely free to concentrate on production since the form he is to use has just been given to him.

To take full advantage of this feature of the test, and to avoid the problem outlined above, the examiner must be careful to use only sentence forms and vocabulary items which are well within the range of the student. (Obviously a test situation is not the place to introduce new material).

Another solution to the problem is presented in the second type of test. Here the examiner presents the stimulus sentence in written or printed form which the student then reads aloud. As in the first type, the student does not have to worry about format (which, indeed, has been carefully set up by the examiner to present certain items he wishes to evaluate), and is free to concentrate on production.

In assessing the student's pronunciation, the teacher should decide in advance exactly which elements of pronunciation he or she wishes to evaluate, and should disregard everything else. For example, in the sentence «C'est chaud la chaussée,» the examiner will disregard everything except the vowels [e] and [o], and will check to ensure that these are pure and not diphthongized as in English. In testing intonation the teacher would listen for the level intonation in the subordinate clause in the sentence: «Pierre, qui est mon voisin, est parti.» and would ignore other features of pronunciation unless the sample were on a tape which could be replayed.

IV TESTING FLUENCY

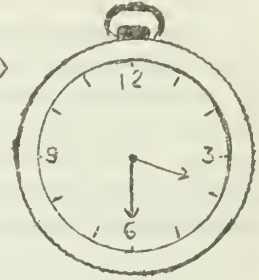
In evaluating fluency, various methods of eliciting a response are possible. The traditional method is simply to ask a question to which the student replies. If it is desirable to provide some control over the structures and vocabulary used in the reply, only questions which test general knowledge, such as «Quel temps fait-il au printemps?» should be used, questions to which the response is fairly predictable. If the teacher does not wish to restrict the answer in any way, a more open question such as «Où avez-vous passé vos vacances?» is quite in order, at least in an informal testing situation. In a formal testing situation there might be such a wide range in the complexity of the responses that it would be almost impossible to assign marks fairly, unless some marking scheme similar to the one included in Appendix A were used.

In any situation in which the teacher wishes to elicit roughly the same response from every student, one of the following forms might be used. In the first type of question the student is asked for information which is conveyed in an accompanying picture. In response to the question he must produce an oral answer. For example:

The student hears «Quelle heure est-il?»

He looks at the picture
and says,

«Il est trois heures et demie.»



In a second type of question he may be shown a single cartoon-type picture, and be asked to give orally the story the picture tells. (It is sometimes advisable to show a sequence of pictures which contain the plot of the story in order to allow the student to concentrate on the language rather than on the plot.) It is very important that the pictures be clear and unambiguous. Possible pictures might include that of teacher standing outside the classroom door watching while some budding Rembrandt, his back to the door, sketches a most unflattering likeness of the teacher on the board. If possible, one member of the class should be plainly aware that the teacher is standing there.

Following the reading of a story in class, the teacher may ask for short resumes in the language to be tested. This has the advantage of allowing the student to put into immediate use the language which he has just learned. It should be noted, however, that this type of activity requires much practice before it is used in a test situation.

A final suggestion which must be used with some caution however, is a test question in which the student is given either orally or in printed form the answer to a question. He must then provide the question which would have elicited that answer. The reason that this type of question must be used with caution is that in some ways it is a test of intelligence, since it requires the student to see a relation which does not exist in ordinary life -- question after answer.

Obviously, for an answer such as «C'est aujourd'hui mardi,» there is a limited choice as to question. With an answer such as «Pierre a seize ans,» however, a variety of question forms come into play. The solution here is to indicate the part of the

answer that is unknown to the questioner. In an oral form, this may be done by repeating the answer in its entire form, then repeating that part of the answer that actually answers the question. In the same way, if the answer is in printed form, the important part may be underlined. Suppose we look at a few examples using the answer given above.

«Pierre a seize ans. -Pierre.»
 (The question will be «Qui a seize ans?»))

«Pierre a seize ans. -seize.»
 (The question will be «Quel age a Pierre?»))

The fact that a "yes/no" question is involved may be indicated is shown in the following way.

«Non, Pierre a seize ans. -seize.»
 (The question will be something like « Est-ce que Pierre a treize ans?»))

Notice should be taken of the fact that with this last type of question the structural form may come in various shapes.

V PROBLEMS IN TEST ADMINISTRATION

One of the major questions to be asked is whether the test will be administered to the entire class at one sitting in the language laboratory, or whether it will be done on a less structured basis over a period of time. The advantages of the first arrangement are fairly well known, but they deserve repetition from time to time.

In the first place it is obviously impossible to test the oral production ability of all students in one classroom simultaneously. Such a situation presents no problem for the language laboratory even in cases where as few as one-third of the booths are equipped to record. (The teacher merely arranges to have the untested part of the class kept separate from those students who have been tested). Yet this is not the greatest advantage as far as oral testing is concerned. The greatest advantage is that every student has the same opportunity to hear the examining source clearly, assuming the test takes the form of question and answer. The resulting benefits in a situation in which aural comprehension is being tested are only too obvious. Unfortunately, not all language teachers have access to a language laboratory, which means that those who don't must rely on a more informal approach to testing oral production.

VI INFORMAL TESTING OF ORAL PRODUCTION

Informal testing can be done while the class is actually in progress, and to this extent is an efficient method of employing the teacher's time. In essence the teacher chooses certain students and certain specific points each day, and makes a written record of how well these particular students handled these particular points. Over a long period of time this practice will produce a fairly complete and accurate picture of the class's progress.

Since informal testing is carried out for the most part without the students even being aware that they are being tested, it is important that the teacher accept certain limitations of this approach right from the start.

In the first place he or she will have to use a very simplified grading scale. The following is a suggested one for testing the production of full sentences or word groups:

- 3 points Answer is satisfactory in all respects.
- 2 points Answer is satisfactory for the most part but with minor errors.
- 1 point Answer has major errors but is intelligible.

If the teacher is assessing a single sound or an intonation pattern, an even simpler form is desirable. In this case, a(+) would indicate a satisfactory response, a(-) an unsatisfactory one. For items longer than a single sentence, the teacher may wish to employ a somewhat more detailed system such as that contained in Appendix A.

Since our system will involve the keeping account of a great number of marks the teacher must keep a grading chart similar to those shown on pages 20 and 21, and must be careful to assess the student's response immediately, and enter its value while he or she thinks of it. Failure to do so will cause the system to break down completely. One other step is vital to the success of this type of testing program.

Prior to each lesson the teacher must decide:

1. what specific points will be checked during that particular unit.

In every unit there will be a heavy stress placed on certain aspects of the work. These are the points on which the work of every student will be evaluated. Obviously, they will change from unit to unit.

2. who the "victims" will be during that particular class period.

These are the students who will be asked three or more questions during a given class period.

Enough other children must answer that every one feels involved in the lesson, but it is important that the teacher have sufficient samples from one student to be able to assess that student's work fairly.

The students who were given the bulk of the questions on a particular day should be assessed again from time to time to ensure that their performance on the day on which they answered three or more questions was not just a matter of luck, or at the other extreme, of illness.

VII THE GRADING CHART

The grading chart itself may take one of the forms shown on the following page. In using the chart, the teacher may wish to indicate only very general skills, in which case the chart would be used over a longer period of time, or he may wish to use the chart in the evaluation of a single lesson. In either case the charts shown possess one further advantage which may not be apparent at first glance. In every class there is a very real risk that the teacher may neglect to question certain students. A glance at the chart will soon reveal the empty spaces which indicate that a student is not being given his fair share of the oral work in class.

The chart itself consists of two parts. The base, which contains the vertical topic categories is made of cardboard, and may be saved for use from year to year. To this base is attached a paper, horizontally-ruled class list. If the bottom of the paper is folded over the back of the cardboard the whole package takes up so little space that it can be carried easily in one's hand, and be readily available for marking. Figure 1 shows the finished appearance of an evaluation chart which is designed to evaluate general skills over a fairly long period of time.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|---------|------------|--------|----------------------|-------------------|---------|---------|
| COURSE: French 20 Class 11B PERIOD: 5 Jan. - 8 Feb. | Articulation | Liaison | Intonation | Rhythm | Vocabulary Selection | Use of Structures | Fluency | AVERAGE |
| | ANDRUZIAK John | / | / | / | / | / | / | |
| | BARKER Bob | / | / | / | / | / | / | |
| | ERICKSSON Ingrid | / | / | / | / | / | / | |

figure 1

If the chart is used as above for recording general skills, then each skill should be assessed several times during the testing period in question, and an average mark arrived at for each individual skill. At the end of the testing period, the teacher may then average these averages, and arrive at a final mark. Thus a sample entry at the end of the testing period might appear as shown below in figure 2 assuming that the same headings were used as in figure 1.

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|
| BARKER Bob | 2 2 | 1 2 | 2 2 | 3 3 | 2 1 | 3 2 | 2 3 | 2 |
| | 3 3 | 1 1 | 2 2 | 2 3 | 1 3 | 2 2 | 1 3 | |
| | 3 3 | 2 1 | 2 2 | 3 3 | 3 3 | 3 2 | 2 2 | |
| | / 3 | / 1 | / 2 | / 3 | / 2 | / 2 | / 2 | |

figure 2

The same format may be used to assess skills related to a specific unit. In this case, the teacher decides in advance what these particular skills are, and enters them in the vertical spaces at the top of the chart. For those teachers using Le Français: Ecouter et Parler¹ similar charts are available from the publisher.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---------|
| | Pronunciation Imperfect Endings | | | | | | | | |
| | Partitive use du, de, la, des | | | | | | | | |
| | Partitive "de" after Negative | | | | | | | | |
| | Qu'est-ce que Ease of use in Questions | | | | | | | | |
| | [Y] | | | | | | | | |
| | Question Intonation | | | | | | | | |
| | Dinner Vocabulary | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | AVERAGE |

figure 3

1. Dominique G. Cote, Sylvia Narins Levy, and Patricia O'Connor. New York, N. Y.: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1962.

VIII TESTING AURAL-ORAL COMPREHENSION

Pitfalls

Far too often in the past, tests of aural comprehension have employed techniques which placed a heavy premium on memory or intelligence or some other ability. To the extent that a student is forced to rely on his memory or on his intelligence to establish relationships which exist between events or people in the sample of speech to which he is listening, the test is not a valid test of aural comprehension. Tests in which the student hears a rather lengthy story followed by a series of questions related to the story are to be avoided if they bring either of the two factors just mentioned into play.

One of the statements repeated frequently in language teaching tends to perpetuate another dangerous myth. I am referring to the wide-spread sentiment that the «dictée» is a highly valid test of aural comprehension. While an illiterate native speaker of French would understand perfectly, I doubt there exists a classroom anywhere in Canada in which he would receive a passing mark on his comprehension ability, for the simple reason that the «dictée» is usually judged on the basis of the spelling ability of the student. In the «dictée» the student is penalized for what he doesn't know, and is given no credit for his ability to comprehend. While the «dictée» is not recommended as a test of audio-comprehension, it may be used in the testing of writing skills.

Techniques

What are some of the techniques which should be used in the testing of aural comprehension? The ability to repeat a sentence of reasonable length shows elementary skill in comprehension, but in using this type of question three problems occur. In the first place there is a tendency on the part of the examiner to be swayed by the quality of the student's pronunciation. In the second place it is a time-consuming type of test unless the examiner has access to a language laboratory. In the third place there is the problem of sentence length: if the sentence is short, a good mimic may be able to reproduce it without actually comprehending it. If the sentence is too long, we are placing a strain on the memory, since even native speakers have difficulty with an utterance of extreme length. For these reasons, except in very elementary courses, such a question should probably not be used.

For sheer ease of administration, especially in a classroom situation where the teacher does not have access to a language laboratory, the objective type answer is to be preferred. In testing aural comprehension in this way many types of question formats are possible, the following being only suggestions.

1. The testing tape repeats a sentence. The pupil indicates on his test paper which of four items was the one used.
e.g. The tape says, «Les maris rient.»

The pupil checks one of:

- a. C'est mon mari.
- b. C'est ma mairie.
- c. Les maris rient.
- d. Les monts rient.

- NOTE: i. The four choices should sound reasonably similar.
ii. Aural-comprehension questions should not be repeated.

2. The student hears a question, and from four possible answers or rejoinders selects the one which suits the situation best.
e.g. The pupil hears, «Vous avez acheté des roses?»

and checks one of

- a. Oui, mais elles étaient très chères.
- b. Oui, j'ai acheté une belle voiture.
- c. Oui, c'est un livre rose.
- d. Non, elle s'appelle Rose.

3. The student overhears a short conversation, and then is asked to select from the printed responses an answer to the question which the tape asks him.
e.g. The pupil hears «Papa, regarde le gros chien.»
«Ah, oui, Jean. C'est le chien de Georges Lafleur.»

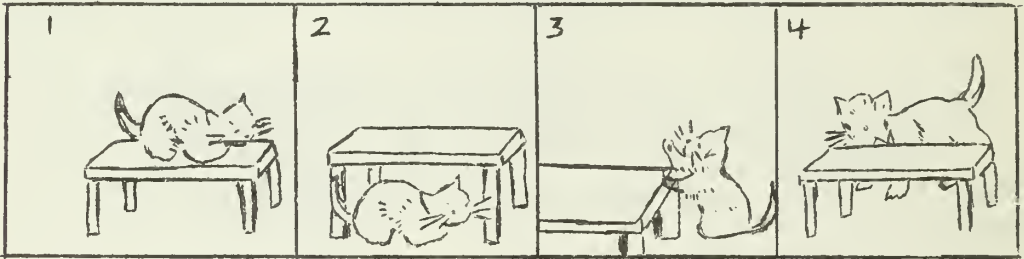
The tape then asks: «Qui est Jean?»

and the pupil selects from among:

- a. Le père
- b. Le fils
- c. Celui qui a le chien

4. One ingenious device which forms a part of the MLA Cooperative Test provides half a telephone conversation on the tape. At appropriate intervals in the conversation, the student is asked to make appropriate rejoinders to what has been said, choosing his response from the possibilities contained in his answer booklet. In another part of the test, students are asked to listen to a radio advertisement, and must then name the product being sold.
5. In elementary programs the pupil may be shown a series of pictures, and told to match the statement on the tape with the appropriate picture as in the following example. The tape says, «Le chat est sur la table.»

and the four choices are:



The pupil merely writes the number of the appropriate picture in the space provided.

Questions in which the students are asked to choose among answers whose sole difference lies in the grammatical concept involved should be reserved for testing knowledge of grammar. The student may understand the stimulus perfectly, but be unable to choose the proper grammatical form from among the choices presented.

e.g. The tape says, «Il faut que Pierre»

and the student chooses from:

- a. Va en ville.
- b. Allait en ville.
- c. Aille en ville.

While objective tests of aural comprehension may take various forms the basic technology underlying their construction is

essentially the same in all cases. Since most tests involve multiple choice answers the examiner should base his answer construction on the following principles. In response to the question, «Quel temps fait-il au mois de juillet?» for example, the student should be offered four choices, each of which has a very definite role to play.

1. «Aujourd'hui.» (This is simply an irrelevant answer to catch the gambler).
2. «Assez chaud.» (The correct answer).
3. «Cinq heures et demie.» (This answer will be selected by the student who doesn't understand the question, but in desperation falls on something familiar, in this case «temps» which he interprets as "time".)
4. «Oui, mais il est parti.» (Again, this answer is designed to catch the student who doesn't know, but who has learned that a question with «il» as subject usually has «il» in the answer).

Of course the teacher should be careful to ensure that the correct answer is found in different locations each time, but that its location does not follow a predictable pattern. It may even be advisable to establish the pattern first to eliminate the successful puzzle solver.

APPENDIX A

DETAILED ORAL PRODUCTION RATING SCALE

This type of rating scale should be used in cases where the student is asked to describe or narrate the story shown in a single picture or in a series of pictures. The total mark is made up of four categories: Vocabulary, Structure, Pronunciation, Fluency. Each section is worth five marks for a total of twenty.

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| <u>Vocabulary</u> | Shows ability to use wide range of vocabulary correctly. | 5 |
| | As above but with occasional slight errors | 4 |
| | Vocabulary is adequate but not wide. Is used correctly. | 3 |
| | As above but with occasional mistakes. | 2 |
| | As above but with many mistakes, or is inadequate. | 1 |
| | Not attempted. | 0 |
| <u>Sentence Structures</u> | Uses a wide variety of sentence forms with no errors. | 5 |
| | As above with occasional errors. | 4 |
| | Uses a fair range of sentence patterns with no errors. | 3 |
| | As above with occasional errors. | 2 |
| | Poor use of sentence forms. | 1 |
| | Not attempted. | 0 |

| | | |
|----------------------|--|---|
| <u>Pronunciation</u> | Near-native. | 5 |
| | Near-native with occasional slight errors. | 4 |
| | Many native features but occasional major errors. | 3 |
| | As above but with many errors. | 2 |
| | No attempt to use native pronunciation. | 1 |
| | Not attempted. | 0 |
| <u>Fluency</u> | | |
| | No hesitation or stumbling. Expresses complete ideas. | 5 |
| | Some hesitation or stumbling but generally excellent continuity. | 4 |
| | Fair continuity with/or much hesitation or stumbling. | 3 |
| | Poor continuity. | 2 |
| | Only occasional ideas expressed. | 1 |
| | Not attempted. | 0 |

(Narrower scales of 0 - 4 or 0 - 3 may be found practicable in less formal testing.)

APPENDIX B

AURAL-ORAL TESTING IN THE LANGUAGE LABORATORYLaboratory Testing Techniques

1. Tests should always be taped in advance, never given "live".
2. In test directions do not use the second language unless you are sure everyone in the class understands the directions perfectly. If not, use English.

REMEMBER: This is a test of a given item, not of their ability to follow directions in a foreign language.
3. Have all test material at the booth beforehand (when feasible), and when necessary, arrange to have tapes pre-threaded to save time.
4. In oral production tests, students should record their name both at the beginning and at the end of the tape.
5. Encourage students to use "pause" levers during tests of oral production to avoid recording silence. Incorporate a bell tone into the tape to tell them when to start the machine, and record their answer.
6. Do not try to evaluate while the test is underway. There is always the danger, among other problems, that you may accidentally cut the student off from the test.
7. Ensure that the test tape is as clear as possible. Check student booths for faulty earphones and recording equipment before the test is scheduled to begin.
8. REMEMBER: STUDENTS MUST HAVE HAD SOME PRACTICE WITH TAPED TESTS ON AN INFORMAL BASIS BEFORE THEY ARE EXPOSED TO A FORMAL, TAPED EXAMINATION.

APPENDIX C

COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE TESTS OF ORAL PRODUCTION
AND COMPREHENSION

Teachers who wish to conduct a more formal type of testing should write to either or both of the following firms for further information about their standardized programs in modern languages.

MLA Cooperative Foreign Language Tests

Cooperative Test Division
Educational Testing Service
Box 999
Princeton, N.J.

or

1947 Center Street
Berkeley, California 94704

PIMSLEUR Modern Foreign Language Proficiency Tests

Test Department
Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc.
757 Third Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10017

APPENDIX D

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5. O'Rourke, Everett. "Evaluation and Testing," in Readings in Foreign Languages for the Elementary School by Stanley Levenson and William Kendrick. Waltham, Mass.: Blaisdell Publishing Company, 1967, 412-425.

Despite the title of the book, the article in question is applicable to all levels.

NOTE:

Each of the books listed in this bibliography has been used during recent years as a text in modern language methods courses at the University of Alberta.

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