

Using Media

by

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I have always believed that education should involve the student in as many ways as possible. Learning improves when the student is stimulated and motivated. This is an important reason that I use as much media as possible in my classroom teaching. Slides, film, audiotape, videotape, overhead transparencies are all useful media to grab and hold the attention of students.

I first began using media when I was in Michigan City, Indiana, teaching junior high school social studies. The students were from the steelworker community of northwest Indiana and had no interest in academics or college or any "book-learning" whatsoever. Yet when I started showing them slides of World War I and II and playing for them songs of that period, they perked up and listened. While working on my doctorate in history at the University of Delaware, I participated in a grant program funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities to improve the teaching of history in ten selected universities. This program gave me the opportunity to experiment with different methods and materials. I learned to photograph and develop my own slides and during the three-year program produced over 100 slide shows using music, narration and slides.

When I came to the University of San Diego in 1977, I helped write the federal grant proposal for \$40,000 to create the Media Center. An important part of that proposal was for equipment and facilities to not only allow student use of media but also to allow faculty production of media resources. Over the last 14 years, I have used the Media Center to produce as well as show media materials. I use 35mm slides in all of my American history survey classes and in most of my upper division seminars. Since those first slides in Michigan City, I have produced over 78,000 history slides for my own collection as well as thousands more for the University of Delaware and other clients. Many of these slides are from photographs and documents in the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and the presidential libraries where I have visited to do research. I have produced several multi-image slide shows for classroom use, including topics such as Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture, World War II propaganda, and the Shaker religious sect. I have also helped produce slide shows on local San Diego history, such as Old Town, the Villa Montezuma, and a videotape on the Gaslamp district.

In the Media Center classrooms, I make use of the video projector to show historical newsreels from the National Archives Universal Newsreel collections as well as historically significant films such as Citizen Kane on videodisc and the complete Birth of a Nation on 8mm film. In every class I use the overhead projector to write terms and notes for the students as I lecture, and at the same time I am showing slides on the other part of the screen. The students are constantly involved visually in the classroom experience. The use of a wide variety of media, from 6-projector computer-controlled

multi-image slide shows to simple overhead maps, I believe presents American history in a way that students will remember, rather than forget.