a reactionary newspaper's distinctions among communists and liberals. To dif-
ferentiate among the two schools, for-
tunately we can still use the Biblical
injunction, "By their works shall ye
know them."

It will be argued that the weapon-
makers, the publishers, may get wind of
the real purpose of the Machiavellian
scheme, the destruction of The Text-
book for The Course—and with it the
enemy, traditionalism. If so, it will be
said, the publishers may be shrewd
enough to refuse to publish our books.
This, however, seems an unlikely move
on the part of the makers of weapons,
the merchants of death who publish The
Textbook. If what these merchants re-
fer to as a "demand" develops, they will
go along with one eye on trends, one on
sales, and with both hands clutching a
financial statement. Despite the brisk-
ness of business at present, the brighter
among them indicate a worried willing-
ness to move in the experimental direc-
tion if they can find out what in thun-
der it is.

Basically, however, fear of the mer-
chants of death getting wind of the
scheme and related fear that tradition-
alis will stiffen their resistance if their
counter-propaganda tips them off are
equally groundless. The secret of our
daring proposal is safe since no tradi-
tionalist and no conservative publisher
reads Educational Leadership. For if
they did, how could they remain tradi-
tional or educationally conservative?

Film Production
for Modern Schools

GEORGE L. WHITE, JR.

For this issue of Educational Leadership we asked people directly re-
 sponsible for the production of tools for learning to contribute from
their backgrounds of experience. George L. White, Jr., education di-
rector of Films Incorporated, analyzes the weaknesses and needs in the
field of film production at present, and indicates possible solutions for
both companies and organizations.

TEACHING is a function of commu-
nicating. When means of communica-
tion were revolutionized five-hundred
years ago by the printing press, the
technical basis for popular education
was laid. Over the last thirty years
means of communication have been
again revolutionized by the radio, the
sound film, and other electronic de-

vices. The full impact of this revolution
has hardly been felt within the school
system.

American education faces the tough-
est job of its career—to explain to chil-
dren the complicated world of today as
their preparation for the world tomor-
row—equipped largely with the teach-
ing tools of yesterday.
Here Is the Situation

Most of the obstacles which stand between the teacher and effective new vehicles of communication are obvious. They arise in part from the lack of awareness of administrators and teachers of the use that can be made of radio, sound motion pictures, and other graphic and audio-visual devices; in part from school budgets that lack the means of both paying adequate salaries and employing these new materials and aids to any significant extent. That is the school's side of it, but there is more to it than that.

Suppose for a moment that the above obstacles are all swept away—that enthusiasm is focused in an all-inclusive program and budgets are ample for procurement. Then what? There is still one more lack—in the face of today's opportunities—the worst of all—the availability of effective materials, particularly in the audio-visual field.

The textbook publisher, in the course of the last ten or fifteen years, has taken great strides toward making available to teachers the kinds of materials they want and need, He has kept alert to new trends in education by consulting and working with informed teachers and scholars. Grade placement, varying curriculum requirements, and learning capacities have all been taken into account in his program. And finally, he has enhanced his contribution by employing the best in new typographic and pictorial devices. The results have been an attractive product, a more stimulating learning experience for the child—and good business.

In contrast, the educational film producer, with few exceptions, has not only continued to turn out dull and unimaginative materials, but what is worse, has made no sustained attempt to turn out materials adapted to the curriculum and the needs of the classroom. The educational film today is usually characterized by at least one of three basic shortcomings.

These Are Its Weaknesses

The most striking of these springs from an apparently compelling urge to tell everything there is to tell about a given topic in ten minutes running time flat without any regard to grade placement or the student's learning capacity. The treatment may be comprehensive but it is rarely comprehensible. Next there is the all too familiar lecture-and-lantern-slide type film which springs from the belief that any strip of celluloid bearing a sound-track roughly related to an assortment of pictorial impressions is a motion picture. And finally we have the "spot" film based on some producer's hunch that this or that topic might be good for the schools. While good films have at times been so produced, the over-all result is a chaotic offering around which no school program of audio-visual instruction could possibly be built. Small wonder that the educational film business is still poor; that no producer can afford to budget for high quality productions. He is caught in the vicious circle of his own making.

It is from this background of inept teaching materials that the thankless task of the audio-visual expert has emerged. He has struggled manfully with so-called "utilization problems," inventing new words and a baffling set of procedures. Indeed, he has an entire ritual to be followed in bringing the film
to the classroom. His ineffectiveness cannot fairly be attributed to him. It is the producer who has been and is basically at fault. The entire audio-visual effort in this respect has been stood on its head. Instead of adapting materials to school programs and needs, the attempt has been made to adapt school programs and methods to existing audio-visual materials. This has served to raise still further obstacles between the teacher and such materials.

This Is the Imperative

In many respects the audio-visual field in education is but just emerging from its pioneer stages. No one is unmindful of the pattern of trial and error through which it has moved, of the few excellent films that have been produced, and of the effort and energy that have kept the field moving. But the day of its maturity has arrived—it should act in grown-up ways. And that means facing squarely its big problem—how to get materials teachers need produced for teachers. This is by no means a problem unique to the producer of audio-visual aids. Many a business long ago found that it was dangerous to assume that full knowledge of the wants and desires of potential customers could be arrived at by either determination or hunch. Today by means of consumer surveys and market analyses the successful businessman is able to design and continuously refine his product on the basis of knowledge of his customers.

There Is a Solution

In the field of audio-visual education little data on the wants and desires of teachers is available. Certainly there is no machinery in existence, no established set of procedures for obtaining, organizing, and evaluating the information needed to relate classroom films with classroom needs. Individuals—teachers and producers alike—have ideas on the subject; that is all. As a case in point the Education Department of Films Incorporated has spent two years in thorough research into the curriculum trends and practices in an attempt to analyze the development of subject matter concepts by successive grade levels for the purpose of securing a picture of what is going on in the schools and determining where films can make their best contribution to the curriculum. This has been a costly job. While we are satisfied that it is a good job we are the first to recognize its inadequacies.

Children do not learn from courses of study and curriculum outlines. The learning experience emerges from the living relationship of teacher and child, and the classroom film that is not touched by the spark of this experience will remain dead. In the absence of any machinery for collecting this necessary data about the learning experience, we have had to employ the long, expensive, and necessarily limited method of individual interviews with teachers and consultants.

Here Is the Proposal for ASCD

I would like to suggest a program that, if put into operation by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, would solve the main problem outlined above. First, the Association, since it is a combination of many curriculum groups, should broaden the scope of its plan for research so that each subject matter area is evaluated...
in terms of its relationship to the various media of communication. It is for the Association to take as its job the determination of the vehicle of communication which should be used by the teacher to assist her in getting across subject matter to students. The conclusions from such a study, if made available to the producer of educational materials, would enable him to concentrate on those areas in which his materials would have their most effective use.

When this is done the Association will then be in a position to develop within each subject matter area a comprehensive and long-range audio-visual program which will clearly indicate teacher needs. Such a program will be not only a guide but a challenge to the film producers. In this respect, the curriculum groups could serve that function which business institutes and associations are now serving for business organizations—providing market research, educational data, and much needed stimulus.

If visual education is to become an indispensable part of the school program, the impetus for the right kinds of visual education must come from within the school; direction for the production of visual aids must come from teachers and curriculum people who know children and subject matter; and the technical skill must come from the motion picture experts who know production.

The program offered above is, I feel, the way out of the vicious circle within which the audio-visual effort has too long revolved: inept teaching films leading to restricted use—and restricted use, in turn, leading to more poor films produced on inadequate budgets. When teachers make known their needs and participate in planning the films they can use, a continuously expanding market will become more than a promise. The producer can spend the amount of money required for the production of films of that quality which a movie-going generation of youngsters deserves and expects. With film sales in the thousands, rather than in the hundreds, the unit cost per film can be brought into line with the pocketbook of every school.

With good and inexpensive materials available, the full impact of this modern revolution in communication will be felt in the schools. Teachers will be able to meet more effectively the complex responsibilities of our times.

IMPORTANT—ASCD Members and Building America Subscribers

Because of a reorganization of distribution facilities, the Grolier Society has discontinued the sale of subscriptions to Building America and units in small lots. Subscriptions now in force will be filled. In the meantime, the revision of previously published units and the preparation of new ones will be continued by Building America.

Please note that the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development will announce new plans in the near future. The Association hopes that these plans for Building America will provide for a more extensive distribution than has ever been possible to date.