

CONTENT ANALYSIS

WAGNER, ROBERT WALTER. "*Design in the Educational Film.*" *Educational Research Bulletin* 33: 141-48; September 1954.

Purpose: To find and test the meaning of what is proved, practiced, and surmised about certain elements in the design of effective educational motion pictures, and to lay a firmer foundation for present production and for future research.

Procedure: Twenty-one most used films listed in the Educational Film Library Association's 1953 publication, *Report on Most Used Films*, were analyzed with respect to structural organization, audience involvement, level of verbalization and rate of delivery, camera interpretation, color, music and sound effects, optical and special effects, and animation. Scripts and teacher's guides as well as the actual films were used in making the analysis. Results of the film analysis were compared with nonexperimental evidence and with experimental evidence on the same elements.

Results: (a) School films tend to be shorter than adult films with an average running time of 15 minutes as compared to 22 minutes for adult films and an average scene length of seven seconds as compared to 10 seconds for the adult films. (b) Only four of the 21 films studied had an introduction, only two contained a summary, and in only six were various forms of repetition—verbal, pictorial, or musical—used to any degree. (c) As measured by the Dale-Chall formula, readability levels of the film narrations were found to be at or near the theoretical reading level of the audience for which they were intended. (d) The average rate of verbal delivery was below the 130 words a minute commonly considered to be a normal rate of speech. (e) All of the films analyzed contained one or more elements related to audience involvement. (f) Straightforward simple camera interpretation characterized the elementary school films while the camera was used more interpretively in the adult films. (g) Color was found in only six of the 21 films analyzed and animation was used in only six films. (h) Sound effects were used in all but one of the 21 films, as were optical effects. (i) Seven of the 21 films included special effects such as "zooms," double exposures, montages, and such, with the greater emphasis on these techniques evidenced in the adult films.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The author concludes that there is generally a close agreement between the actual design of these 21 widely used films and certain empirical and experimental evidence related to film production, and offers 10 observations or suggestions with respect to the well-designed educational film. —*John Moldstad*