

## 23. Teaching Aids

*One of the old and fully true sayings is that all education is self-education if it is really education.*

HARRIS P. MOSHER, 1945

**I**T WAS for the Home Study Courses, to supplement the material available in standard textbooks, that Academy publication of monographs, manuals, and atlases began in earnest. Like the home study concept itself, this idea too was partially borrowed from the army courses for reserve officers that were augmented with paperbound manuals.

The Academy first began generating its own educational material to accompany the instruction courses. Members had shown a tremendous demand for duplicates of the slides and charts used in the courses. In 1931 the Academy began printing synopses of the courses that were equally well received.

An expansion on the synopsis idea occurred in 1938 when the Academy published monographs covering in more detail the subject matter of three instruction courses.<sup>1</sup> Also in that year, the Academy sponsored publication of the atlases of ophthalmic and otolaryngic pathology. Both the monographs and the atlases were experimental, and their immense popularity with the membership prompted more of the same. During the next few years, the atlases were twice revised and a number of monographs were published.

The atlases of pathology were immediately adopted as official texts for the Home Study Courses, and it was soon evident that a concise presentation of the essentials of a subject would be extremely useful in the courses, not to mention helpful for the student. What the Academy called teachers' manuals were a step away from the long-used and long-to-be-used method of presenting the student of medicine with a pile of books and telling him to read them all, cull what he thought important, and he would be tested later.

Academy-produced manuals did not replace standard textbooks—the courses entailed considerable reading—nor was there any attempt in the impossible task of distilling the whole body of necessary knowledge into a few convenient handbooks. Nonetheless, the manuals, and the courses themselves, were based on the premise of presenting the necessities of knowledge and getting them across to the student.

**A**fter the Second World War, the Academy mood was definitely one of optimism and expansiveness toward all projects. Income was exceeding expenses by a comfortable margin, everything the Academy proffered in the way of education was proving golden, and there was a feeling, as William Benedict expressed in 1945, that "we do not know yet how far the

American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology can go. It is still young; it is growing."<sup>2</sup>

In 1947, \$12,000 was appropriated for study of material on embryology of the eye at the Carnegie Institution of Washington Department of Embryology in Baltimore. Motivating the bequest was the hope that the material could be used for preparation of a teachers' manual or film.<sup>3(p126)</sup> A Committee on the Study of Audio-Visual Instruction was appointed a year later, and in 1949, the Academy decided to sponsor a professionally produced motion picture, "Embryology of the Eye."<sup>4(p8),5</sup>

Work on a similar film "Embryology of the Ear," began in 1951, with the Carnegie Institution's Baltimore laboratory again providing the material.<sup>6(p843)</sup> The eye film, released in 1950, was lauded for setting "a standard for teaching films in the basic medical sciences,"<sup>7(p162)</sup> and the ear film, released in 1955, was extolled as "the greatest teaching film ever produced," with the "impact of a great symphony, a magnificent assembling of scientific work."<sup>8(p906)</sup>

Cost of the two films, which far exceeded original estimates, was well over \$150,000.<sup>9(pp804-806)</sup>

That the films be utilized was the only return the Academy wanted on its investment, and in this there may have been some disappointment. Prints of the films were made on order and sold at cost. Dean Lierle, who as chairman of the audio-visual committee had the job of reporting on yearly orders, expressed pride that the films were in use in medical schools here and abroad, but there was a tone of apology that sales could not be counted as brisk. By 1964, the Academy had finally sold 100 prints of the eye film, including a number to the AMA that were available for loan, but only 25 prints of the more elaborate ear film. The price tag of \$500 for the ear film was mentioned as prohibitive for most university budgets.

The Academy would not again venture into education via audiovisual media until the advent of the videotape cassette that was suitable for personal use by physicians in home or office. An updated version of the eye film was included as part of the videotape programs of the 1970s.

**M**anuals remained the major Academy-developed teaching aid, and they came to be valued in their own right, not merely as adjuncts to the Home Study Courses. In the 1950s, Dr Benedict stimulated production of more manuals, saying there were many areas that needed to be covered and that the manuals had become an important part of the Academy's educational program. More than 60,000, he noted, had been sold between 1946 and 1956.<sup>10(p840)</sup>

The original idea of no-nonsense treatises on the basic sciences of ophthalmology and otolaryngology was expanded with manuals designed as diagnostic aids and guides in medical and surgical therapy, and more recently, those reviewing literature and defining terminology which are valuable study and research tools. From 1938 through 1978, the Academy published 94 different works, in addition to multiple revisions of many works and continued sponsorship of the pathology atlases (see Appendixes 3 and 4).

These publications came to be used in medical schools and specialty training programs and by physicians the world over. The combined copies-sold figure for all publications since 1938 would be substantial. Only a smattering of yearly sales figures exists. In 1964, with 33 titles available, about 10,000 copies were sold. In 1976, with 44 titles available, more than 12,000 were sold.

The Academy output of teaching material would vault upward and diversify with the beginning of Continuing Education Programs.