A BRIEF REPORT ON A MODIFIED SLIDE VIEWER FOR FADING VISUAL STIMULI

A Sears slide viewer (model 99261, \$8.99) was modified to allow pictorial visual stimuli to be faded out in a reading program similar to that described by Corey and Shamow (1972). Two sections of the housing were removed (A and B in Figure 1) to allow words (or other material to be learned) on the front of a translucent slide to be seen by the subject and experimenter. The visibility of pictorial stimuli on the back of the slide was controlled by a rotary switch (C in Figure 1) resistor circuit in series with the internal lamp. Using the accessory 4-V ac transformer (Sears model 9918, \$3.99) as the power source, resistor values of 0, 1.5, 2.7, 4.7, 5.3, and 6.2 ohms in parallel with the internal lamp switch, along with an "off" position, provided an appropriate number of fading steps. The system can be made more flexible if a potentiometer is substituted for the rotary switch, allowing variation of the back illumination on a continuous scale.

The modified slide viewer may be constructed for less than \$30.00 and about 8 hr of semi-skilled labor. Care must be taken when sections A and B are

cut out that the lens system is not scratched; it is best to disassemble the housing completely first. This was accomplished by carefully prying off the top section of the viewer and taking out the lens assembly. Then, the lens holder and housing were cut with a band saw. The exact shape of sections A and B are not critical as long as enough light enters to make the front of the slide visible.

Slides were prepared by first photographing line drawings, which served as the initial controlling stimuli, on Polaroid Type 51 high-contrast film. The words to be learned were printed on the back side of the picture in 18-pt. lower case press-on letters. Both sides were then coated and the slide was placed in a 2 by 2 in. (5 by 5 cm) plastic mount.

Forty preschool children, ranging in age from 3 to 5 yr, were studied in a systematic replication of the Corey and Shamow (1972) study. Sixteen slides were presented eight times to each subject for a total of 5120 trials in the reading study and 240 trials in a later study of foreign language acquisition. The slide change lever (D) had an initial tendency to jam when only one or two slides were in the slide tray; this occurred on approximately 5% of the trials. This problem may be avoided if the experimenter maintains light pressure on the last few slides while changing them, loads more slides into the tray, or places a 2 by 2 by 0.25 in. Plexiglas dummy slide on the top of the stack.

Fig. 1. Drawing of a modified slide viewer, showing parts of housing removed (A and B), rotary switch to control fading steps (C), and slide-change lever (D).

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