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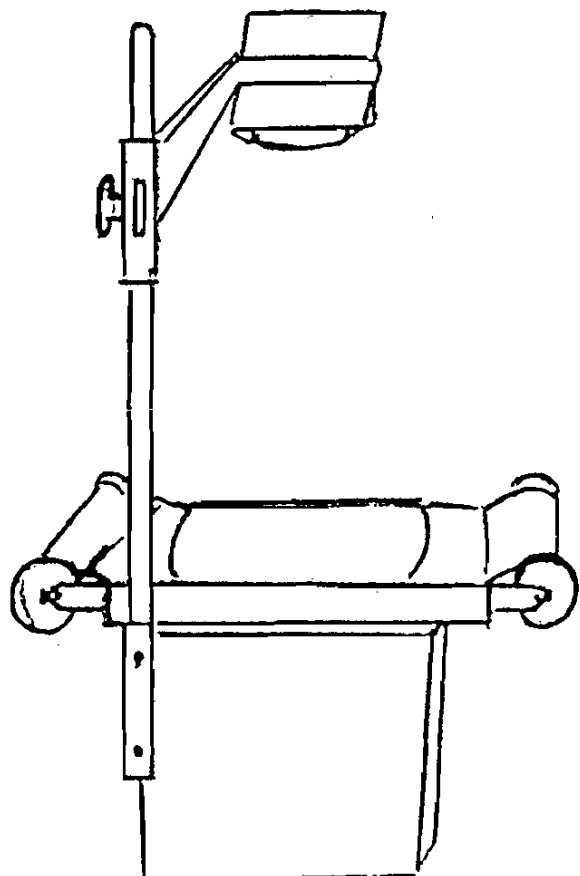
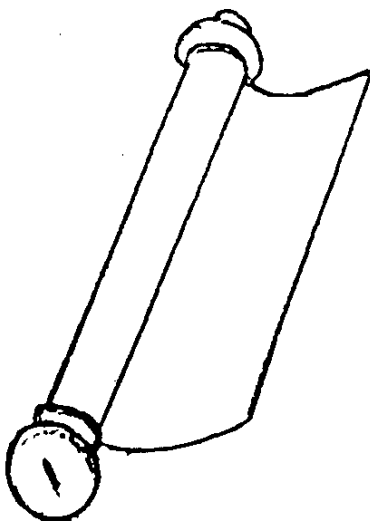
MAKING YOUR OWN OVERHEAD TRANSPARENCIES

MURIEL LIM-QUEK

The overhead projector is a well-known instructional aid in the classroom. Much has already been written about its uses and advantages, so readers can easily refer to these books in any library. The purpose of this article is to inform you about the preparation of software to go with your overhead projector.

The standard glass-stage of the overhead projector is usually meant for projecting a transparency measuring 8" X 10" in format. The acetate transparency may come in a roll-form of 50 ft. or in single rectangular sheets. The roll-form of acetate, which is detachable, is fixed to the rollers on either side of the overhead projector, whenever the user requires it. By winding the roller clockwise or anti-clockwise, the user is able to project a clean surface for presenting his materials.

Transparency in Roll-form



However, it is more convenient and flexible to use the single sheet transparency which can be kept by the owner himself. He can even prepare his overhead projection materials well in advance. Single sheet transparencies come in a few different formats: 8½" X 10½"; 8½" X 11"; 8¼" X 11½"; they come in boxes of 100 sheets each. The transparencies are also of many different kinds, such as: the write-on kind, the heat-processed or infra-red kind, the heat-resistant kind (for plain paper copiers), and the colour foils. There are several ways of preparing Overhead Transparencies for instruction. The easiest and quickest method of course is to use the write-on film, for you can easily do it at home.

Hand-made Method

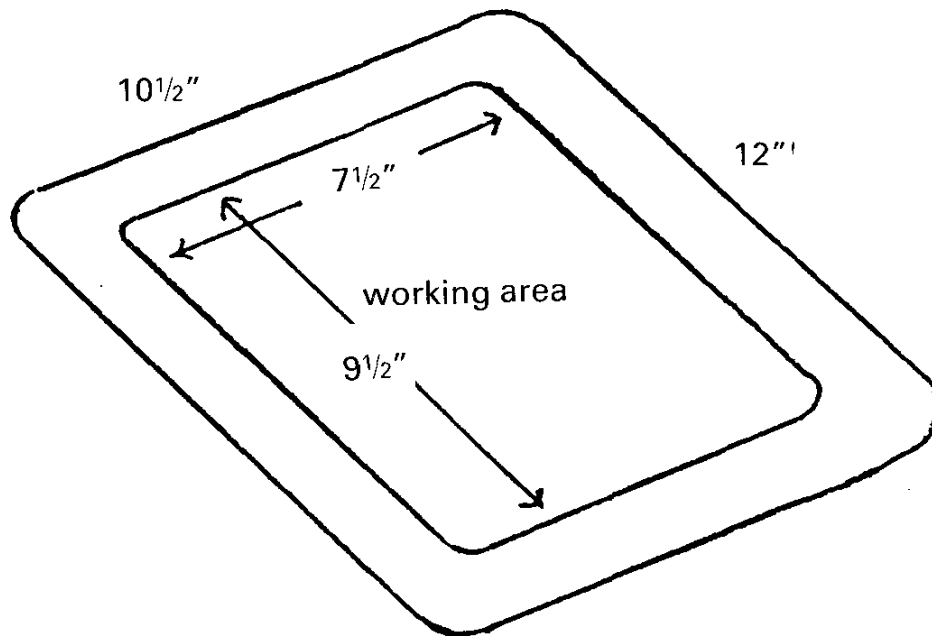
Make a plan of your content materials, preferably on a sheet of graph-paper or line-paper, within a 7½" X 9½" working area. Leave at least a ½" margin all round for framing later on. Place the write-on film on top of your 'master', and trace over the materials required, with the special OHP felt-tip pens or markers. Your graph-paper below will guide you in your arrangement and letter spacing. Use bits of masking tape on your write-on film to hold it firmly in place for ease of drawing and writing.

It is essential that you do not treat the overhead transparency – content-wise – like a page from a book or just like a handout. Since the working area of the transparency is only 7½" X 9½", you should therefore keep its content material as simple as possible, with one idea per transparency. The message should be clear and visible, for if any member in the audience cannot see or read it, the transparency is not doing its job.

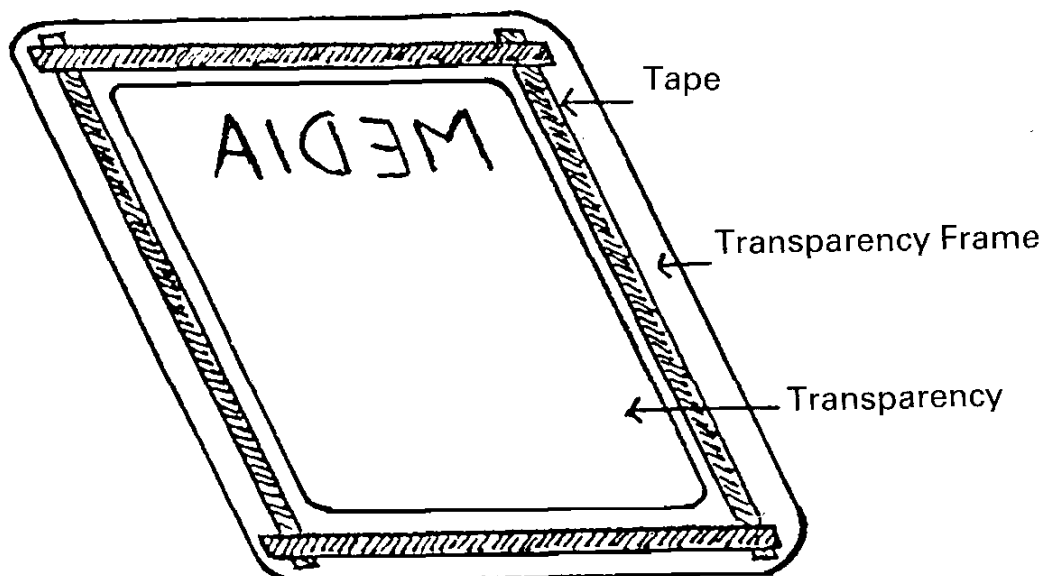
The content material should not be cluttered; break long paragraphs into sentences, and sentences into phrases and key words. On a vertical format use a maximum of 8 – 10 lines per transparency, and 5 – 6 words per line. Whilst on the horizontal format you may use 6 – 7 lines per transparency, and 8 – 9 words per line. Use capitals for titles and for emphasis; lengthy verbal information should be in the lower case, no smaller than ¼" in size.

The transparency you use should be crisp and clear (wipe away finger prints and dirt with an antistatic cloth). Visuals on the transparency should be recognisable, the diagrams and

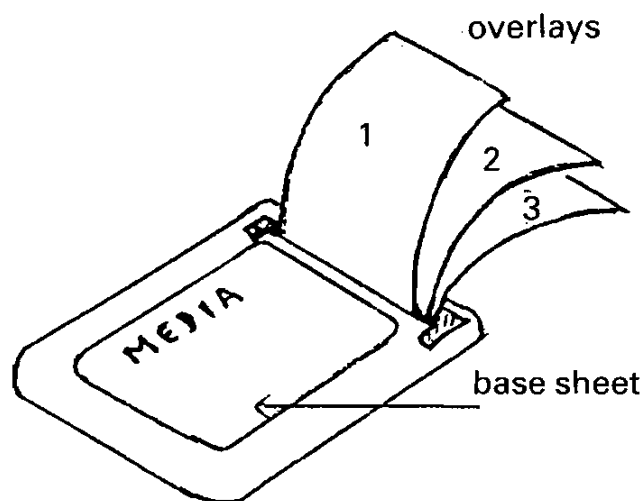
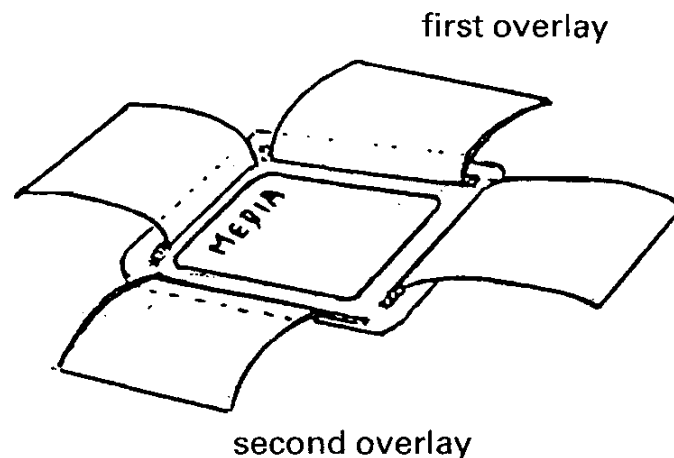
illustrations should be neatly labelled too. Make use of colours to provide clarity, emphasis and variety. For small areas you can use the OHP markers, but for large areas it is better to use the OHP colour films to give evenness of colour to your diagrams.



After completing the content materials in the transparency, mount the latter onto the transparency frame. Framing the transparencies has several advantages. Firstly, they look neater & can be protected easily with a slip sheet. Secondly they can be properly filed and numbered. Moreover, additional notes can be written on the frame border as a memory aid for the presentation.



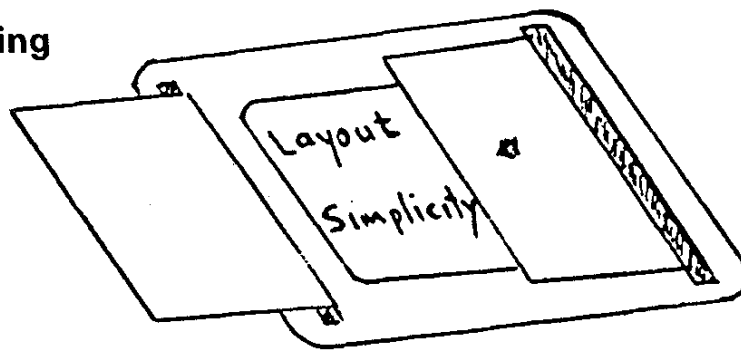
If overlays are required they have to be properly sequenced and numbered, with the base sheet firmly mounted onto the underside of the frame. The first overlay will flip on, on the top to match the information on the base sheet, followed by the second overlay, then the third overlay, and so on.



To make your transparency presentation interesting and attractive you should make use of colours, by using either the OHP pens and markers or the colour projection films or both. Cut out the colour foils which are self-adhesive and stick them to the appropriate areas. There are also OHP letter transfers, which come in various colours for use on overhead transparencies.

If certain portions of the information in the transparency are not to be revealed as yet in the presentation, you can easily mask it by covering these portions with opaque cards, which are then firmly taped on to the frame borders. Number these cards in sequence and put bits of masking tape on each one of them for easy lifting as you go along in your presentation.

Masking



Write-on transparencies are simple and easy to prepare if you bear the above procedures in mind.

Other ways for making overhead transparencies are the heat-processed method, the diazo method, the photographic method and the picture-lifting method. Except for the first one the other three methods are rather long, tedious and complicated. This article will also look at the heat-processed method since the transparency-maker machines are easily available.

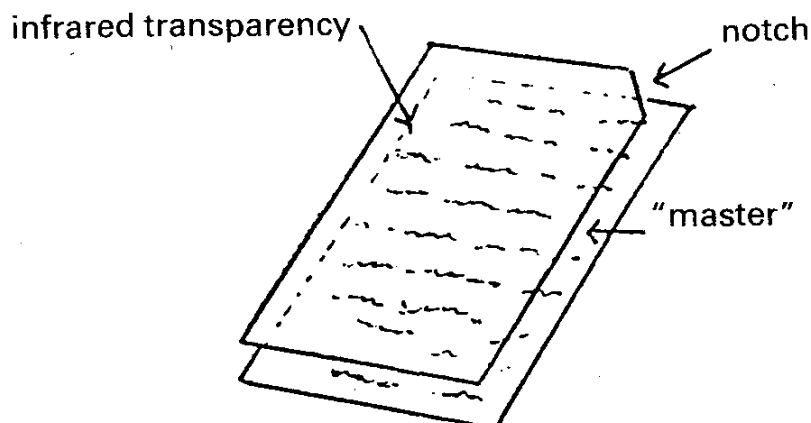
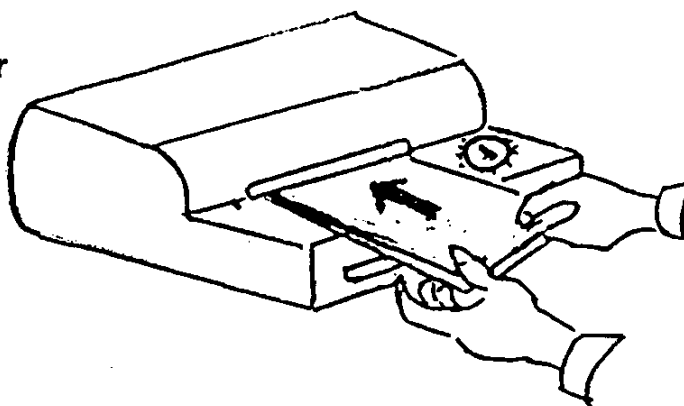
Heat-processed Method

Transparencies for the heat-processed equipment are specially coated for light sensitivity. They are in single sheets and come in plain white or in assorted rainbow colours with a slight cut at one corner. Another of these infra-red transparencies come in a set, composed of a transparency, a slip-sheet, a flimsy paper film and a piece of paper backing, glued narrowly at the top. This set is then used to produce an overhead transparency of either black and white or colour images.

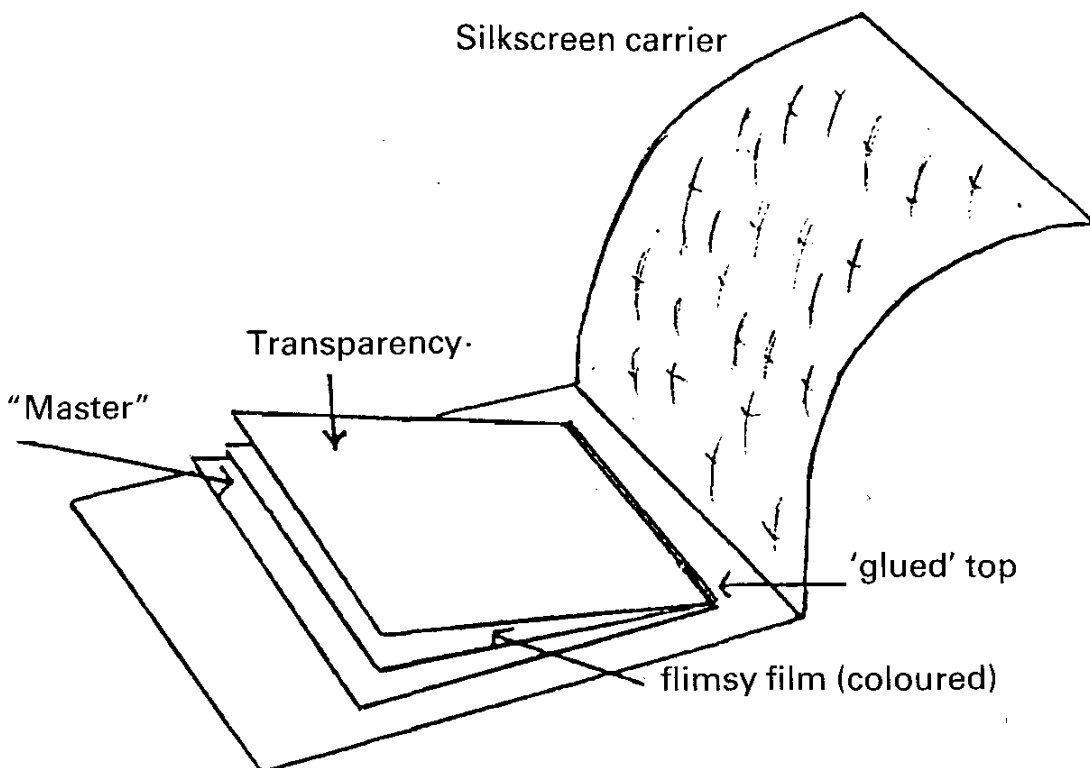
To produce a heat-processed transparency you need to have a "master" which contains your content-material. Prepare your master neatly in black ink on a paper of the same size as the infra-red transparency. Avoid complicated drawings. Whether they are diagrams, illustrations, or texts, the message has to be done clearly and visibly as on your write-on transparency. Line-drawings in Indian ink or pencil, and printed materials and pictures from magazines and books can also serve as "masters". However, materials written with felt pen, ballpen, coloured pencils, fountain pen, and even printed colours, will not be suitable for the thermal process. The quality of your overhead transparency will depend on your masters, for the finished product is only as good as the original.

When using the single sheet infra-red transparency, which provides black images, place it on top of your prepared "master" with the notched corner on your top right-hand side. Then insert the 2 sheets together through the machine, after adjusting the light control knob. In a matter of seconds the sheets will roll out, you then separate the transparency from your master. Mount the transparency on a transparency frame.

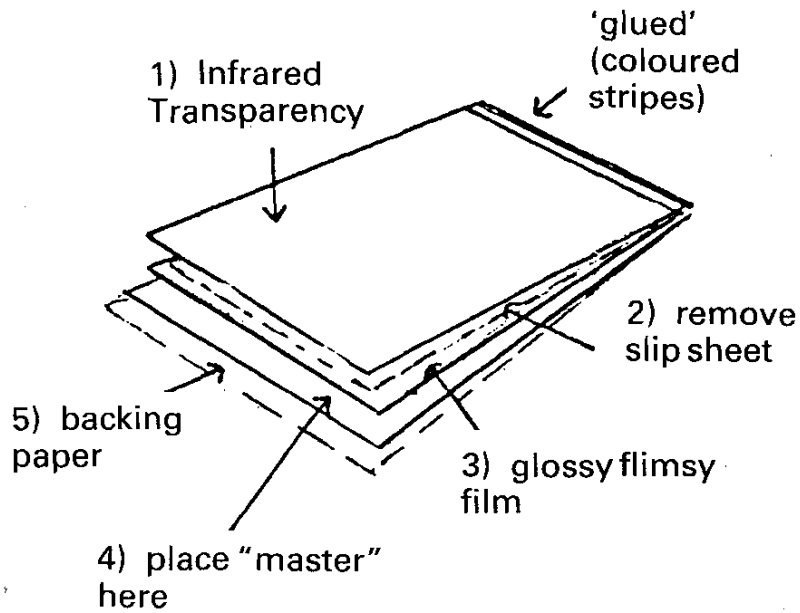
Transparency Maker



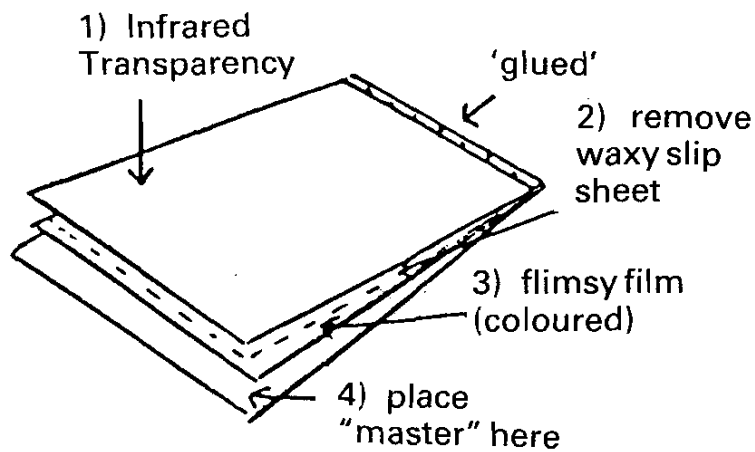
In the case of the glued 'set' of infra-red transparencies, you first take away the slip sheet, which lies between the transparency and the flimsy paper film. Place your "master" below the flimsy film with the firmer transparency on top, and the backing paper at the bottom. Then insert the whole set into the transparency maker machine. If the 'set' has no backing paper attached, you will need a silk screen carrier to hold the set before inserting it through the machine.



The infra-red transparencies can give you black images on a plain white background or on a rainbow coloured background; or coloured images on a tinted background. The flimsy film on the transparency-set will show the kind of colour images that will appear in your processed transparency, i.e. green flimsy film will give green images, purple will give purple images, and so on.



Without Carrier



Use With Silkscreen Carrier

Overhead transparencies are not difficult to prepare. All that is required is your time and some basic skills. But once these transparencies are well-prepared they can contribute to effective and meaningful learning.