

TYPES OF LABORATORY INSTALLATIONS

Regardless of the type of language laboratory being used, the first consideration should always be Simplicity of Operation and Control.

CONVENTIONAL LAB.

Here, the teacher's console is located in front of the array of booths, Distribution switches enable the teacher to determine which students will hear which source.

REMOTE – CONTROLLED

This arrangement enables students to control specific tape decks located elsewhere at remote locations. The actual equipment installation is similar to that of a conventional laboratory room. The electronics are relatively more complex, though. Here, the STUDENT can; start, stop, backtrack, and rewind at will, without actually including combinations e.g. Listen, Respond, and Record.

Both library operations are available.

ADVANTAGES OF THE REMOTE LAB INCLUDE

The student is freed from handling tapes.

Maintenance problems are reduced as students cannot damage tape decks.

Semi-automatic operation of the lab, without much supervision, is possible.

Remote decks may be permanently loaded with the current tape enabling students to go to certain booths and immediately work in library mode.

DIAL LAB.

The Dial Access Lab needs more spaces than the Conventional Lab. It also needs more technicians at any given time. It is basically a broadcast operation. Depending on the size of operation, any number of students can access a particular tape at any given time.

Usually, a number of rooms are used to provide space for the different programs mounted; video and /or computer interface may be added again, depending on the size of the operation,

The student needs a minimum of equipment, namely, an activated headset, a dial or touch-tone selector, and controls for a remote selector.

ELECTRONIC CLASSROOM

These are specially equipped classrooms that serve the dual purposes of regular classes and language lab. Specially designed convertible desks open up to reveal controls as well as provide booth dividers for each student.

Wiring and headset storage are the main problems here. This is a compromise solution to the problem of space shortage.

MOBILE LAB

This is basically a console on wheels with storage spaces for headsets. It is best used within a single building where it can be moved from one room to another (Writing is very minimal).

ADVANTAGE

Any classroom may be turned into a lab

DISADVANTAGE

Equipment is heavy and hampers free movement. It requires time and energy to set up.

WIRELESS LAB

The wires connecting the sources to student headsets are replaced by radio transmission in a wireless laboratory. The console contains a small transmitter that serves this purpose. Monitoring and intercom are NOT possible with this lab. (It combines well with the Mobile Lab, though the important functions of monitoring and intercom are forfeited)

PORTABLE LAB

This is similar to the Mobile Lab except that instead of being placed on wheels, it is placed in weather-proofed packages enclosed in containers with handles. It is either powered by batteries or portable electric generators. It is ideal for poverty stricken areas.