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SPEECH CORRECTION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

By

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(This is the first of a series of two articles.)

The purpose of the speech correction program in the public schools is to rehabilitate and re-educate children having speech difficulties. California is outstanding in that it provides a state-directed program of speech correction with adequate state aid. The Bureau of Correction of Speech Defects and Disorders is now beginning its thirteenth year of activity as part of the Division of Special Education of the State Department of Education.

At the close of the school year 1936-37, our records show that classes in speech correction have been established in 56 cities and towns, representing 31 counties, with approximately 150 trained teachers in charge. The total enrollment in these speech correction classes during this year was reported as 15,918. Of these, 4,701 were enrolled in the nervous speech disorder group, and the remaining 11,217 were enrolled in classes for articulation defects.

In 1931 the American Society for the Study of Disorders of Speech (now the American Speech Correction Association) compiled a list of terms having to do with speech disorders. This classification is admittedly both tentative and abridged, and consists of seven main categories, as follows:

1. **DYSPEMIA**—Nervous disorders of speech due to psychoneuroses (stammering or stuttering, nervous hesitation, cluttering and neurotic lisping).
2. **DYSARTHRA**—Defects of articulation due to lesions of the nervous system (neurotic organic lisping, lalling, oral inactivity, invented language).
3. **DYSLALIA**—Functional and organic defects of articulation (mutism, invented language, foreign accent, cleft palate speech, oral inactivity or habitual sound substitutions, etc.).
4. **DYSPHONIA**—Defects of Voice (voicelessness, thick speech, guttural, nasality, breathy voice, etc.).
5. **DYSRHYTHMIA**—Defects of rhythm other than stuttering (cluttered, unrhythmic speech).
6. **DYSLOGIA**—Difficulty in the expression of ideas, due to psychoses (absence of ideas, sluggish speech, irrelevant speech, logorrhea).
7. **DYSPHASIA**—Impairment of the power of language, due to weakened mental imagery, as in word-blindness, word-deafness, aphasia, agraphia, alexia or mixed aphasia or dysphasia.

ALYPHEMIA—NERVOUS SPEECH DISORDERS (Functional)

The causes of functional nervous speech

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NINTH ANNUAL CONVENTION PLANS

"Speech as a Social Integrator" has been announced by President Elwood Murray as the theme of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Western Association of Teachers of Speech which will be held in Denver, Colorado, November 25, 26, and 27th, immediately following the Speech Tournament and Intercollegiate Forensic Experience Progression which will convene on the campus of the University of Denver on November 22, 23 and 24.

There is every indication that this will be the largest and most enthusiastic convention in the history of the Western Association. Giving added incentive to the committees at work upon the Integrated Speech Program, preliminary convention plans reveal that the first general meeting of the convention will take the form of a panel discussion followed by section meetings to discuss the implications of the term "Integration" in its relation to speech education. General meetings, section meetings, panel discussions, will follow in rapid order during the three-day period interspersed with group luncheons, breakfast meetings, teas and a reception. A highlight of the social program of the convention will be the annual Thanksgiving Dinner when the delegates will be greeted by the Governor of Colorado.

The entire meeting will depart sufficiently from customary procedures to permit the introduction of new discussion techniques without losing any of those features which have contributed to the successful culmination of past conventions. Famed speakers and authorities in the various specialized fields will, as in the past, give the meeting added touches.

The Rocky Mountain Speech Conference which usually holds its annual meeting during the month of February has decided to combine its program with that of the Western Association.

The first activities of the Intercollegiate Forensic Strand and Debate Tournament will get under way November 22-24 preliminary to the convention with approximately 500 college and junior college students taking part in forum speaking, discussion oratory, and debate. In functional sequences, the project will illustrate a systematic presentation of the general social studies unit, on the "Preservation of Democratic Liberties."

Railroads entering Denver are offering special transportation rates and extra facilities for the convenience of members attending. It is expected that from some cities, special cars will be attached to regular trains to permit the members to travel to the convention together.

Main headquarters for the convention will be in Mayo Hall on the campus of the University of Denver, with the Cosmopolitan Hotel providing the downtown headquarters.

9th Annual Convention
Western Association of Teachers
of Speech
November 25, 26, 27, 1937
with Forensic Tournament preceding
November 22, 23, 24, 1937
DENVER, COLORADO

A Special
Convention Supplement of
WESTERN SPEECH
complete with all program details,
railroad schedules, hotel rates, and
entertainment guide
Will Appear November 5.
Watch for It!

EDUCATIONAL RADIO SCRIPT EXCHANGE

By
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U. S. Office of Education

Many requests are constantly coming to the United States Office of Education from schools, colleges and other institutions including radio stations for educational radio scripts and production aids. It is safe to predict that this fall there will be a more wide-spread use of radio in and by schools than ever before in the annals of American education.

Local school groups are becoming more and more active in the study of the technical problems involved in the preparation and production of effective radio programs, and of the use of the unique power of radio, with its many ramifications, to motivate and give added vitality to the work of

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SPEECH CORRECTION

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orders, we believe, are psychological, and the speech disorder itself is an external symptom of some difficulty which may have a psycho-neurotic origin. Severe shocks and emotional conflicts in very early childhood may remain as subconscious memories for many years and continue to disturb the speech until correction is made.

Many influences enter into the causes and the continued manifestation of nervous speech disorders. The pre-school or early home environment is extremely important. If the child with the nervous speech disorder is living in a home where there is a lack of understanding, inconsistency, laxity, over-dominance, quarreling, sarcasm or unfavorable comparison of that child with another, the speech disturbance is very likely a result of the environment. The school environment must also be considered. If the teacher is too severe or impatient, or if the child is subject to ridicule by his classmates, his confidence in his power to control himself may be seriously shaken.

STUTTERING-STAMMERING

Both stammering and stuttering are terms commonly used in this country for functional spasms of speech. While the manifestations of these disturbances are slightly different, the causes and treatment are similar. To avoid confusion, the word stammering is used throughout this article. In Europe and in several centers in the United States, "stuttering" is used to cover both of these speech manifestations.

There are two distinct types of stammering which occur at different periods. The superficial type often occurs during the earliest years, when the child is acquiring articulatory co-ordinations. Often the child is not only fumbling for speech and language, but he is also laboring under the stress of many intruding ideas. If no serious emotional disturbance comes at this time, the child sooner or later establishes the proper co-ordinations and overcomes his stammering. This is often described as "outgrowing" it. Occasional stammering or hesitation is sometimes noticed in adults and is frequently due to a lack of organization and definiteness in thinking, or to temporary emotional disturbance.

The second or true type of stammering generally occurs at a later period when speech and language have been completely acquired. Many histories of these cases show that an emotional maladjustment, due to environmental disturbances of some nature, is causing emotional conflict. Since it is largely through speech that man is able to express his emotions, it is but natural that these conflicts should be manifested in speech. This second type is the kind of stammering found in the speech classes in our schools.

At the onset of this symptom, the child's attention is repeatedly called to his speech failure by the alarmed parents. In many

cases, the child is punished and invariably told to repeat the words over which he has stumbled. This repetition soon starts abnormal idea-associations toward speech. The child accumulates his own particularly difficult words or speech situation memories. Around these speech failures cluster many emotions, such as dread of failure, fear of ridicule, dislike of being different, and other disturbing emotions. All these emotional memories form what is called the "blockade pattern" that occupies the whole attention. Will power alone cannot control the situation, because of the very nature of the fixed idea, which is a conviction of inability to speak. According to Dr. Charles Baudouin of Geneva, an authority in the field of psychotherapy, the law of "reversed effort" is responsible for the futile struggles of the stammerer. The "will to speak" is overpowered by the stronger conviction that he cannot speak, and his conviction controls the motor center.

There are two varieties of true stammering, audible and silent. The audible stammer is easily recognized, but there is little or no outward manifestation in silent stammering, although there is a complete muscular and psychic inhibition. This later type of disorder is scarcely ever recognized by either parents or teachers. Children so handicapped are therefore greatly misunderstood and often thought to be either stupid or stubborn because they are unable to make a sound.

Dr. Josephine Jackson, author of "Outwitting Our Nerves," described a stammerer as "cornered." "He is beset from within by a grip that will not loosen and from without by the darting menace of humiliation, ridicule and defeat. But the paradox is that the stammerer corners himself. Not by any physical handicap is he held, not by an inherently unfriendly environment, but by his own suggestion to himself."

Somewhere in the beginning, his emotions in conflict expressed a similar struggle in speech. "Then came the fear, the sensation of being caught in a trap, of not being able to depend on his machine to serve his needs. Instantly a state of tension was set up; and in that tension of muscle and mind lies the whole sad secret of this speech difficulty. Speech cannot slip smoothly along over muscles that go into a vise-like contraction under the stimulus of fear." It is for this reason that we place great stress upon relaxation of both mind and body in our treatment.

Stammering is frequently intermittent in its manifestation. In many cases the patient will stammer in school but not at home. Sometimes the reverse is the case, and the stammering is manifested at home but not at school. A child will often stammer when in a certain teacher's room, but have no difficulty when with another teacher, showing that this condition is governed by idea-associations.

NERVOUS HESITATION

Nervous hesitation is manifested by agi-

tated, faltering, confused speech. Excessive self-consciousness and lack of poise are present, often resulting in a refusal to recite. Nervous hesitation is symptomatic of the same feeling of inadequacy, inferiority and timidity that characterizes stammering.

CLUTTERING

Cluttering is manifested by indistinct enunciation and excessive rapidity of speech, involving the dropping of letters or syllables, or the mumbling of sounds, syllables and words. The breathing is often spasmodic and irregular. Yet, when not under stress, it is possible for the speaker to articulate every consonant and consonant.

NEUROTIC LISPING

Neurotic lisping is a form of nervous speech disorders manifested by the substitution of a complete or partial interruption or blockage of the outgoing breath stream which is required for the production of such consonants as *j* and *v*, *s* and *z*, voiced and voiceless *th*, etc. Such interruption of the outgoing breath stream changes *j* to *p*, *v* to *b*, *s* and voiceless *th* to *t*, *z* and voiced *th* to *d*, etc.

This speech disorder is the result of excessive muscular tension and is allied to stammering in origin. It is rather frequently found combined with stammering. However, the muscular tension excited is of a constant rather than of a spasmodic kind. It may be differentiated from other types of phonetic substitution in that it appears in emotionally maladjusted individuals, not in phlegmatic persons or those who do not possess normal intellectual capacities.

(To be concluded in December issue)