

## THE NEW SPEECH EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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I should like to open my paper with a quotation from Professor Edward Z. Rowell of the University of California:

"In the last two decades a revolution has taken place in the conception which our biological and social scientists hold of the nature and function of speech in human life. In the older science the view prevailed that speech has primarily to do with the expression of our state of mind. In the new science the view is held that speech is an essential activity of human life which fulfills an indispensable function in the real business of living, and without which there could be no cooperation, no division of labor, no governmental institutions, no social codes, no civilization. This is essentially a difference in perspective, primarily, but it is a difference which makes speech seem a thousand times more vital thing than it seemed to be before."

As a result of a California State survey made by Mr. Nicholas Ricciardi, our State Chief of Secondary Education, it was found -- first, that only a small proportion of High School students were taking any of the courses in speech -- whether known by Oral English, Oral Expression, Public Speaking, Dramatics, or Speech Correction; -- second, that these courses offered were inadequate to meet the actual needs; and third -- that many of the teachers conducting courses in Oral English had not had adequate speech training. As a result of these findings, Dr. Ricciardi asked me to serve as Chairman of a State Committee to draw up recommendations for revision of the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education relative to Secondary School Programs of Study. Last winter we invited many representatives from all the Universities, Teacher Training Colleges, High Schools and Elementary School Supervisors, City and Rural, to meet for the purpose of formulating recommendations to place oral speech training on an equal basis with written English requirements.

The following brief summary was submitted to the State Board of Education:

1. That the point of view with reference to the nature of speech training which should characterize the teaching of speech in Secondary Schools should be that speech is a tool in the common business of living as well as in the speech arts. This view is particularly opposed to the older conception that speech training aims at the development of speech effects.
2. That one year full time intensive work in the fundamentals of speech be required of every student for graduation, as soon as this requirement can be put into effect. Pending such a regulation the Committee recommends that one half year of such work be required for graduation, carrying one half unit of credit.

3. That only specially trained teachers of speech be permitted to teach such a course. All of these teachers should have the minimum training in Speech required by the Department of Education, plus a course in Speech Correction and Mental Hygiene. (In cases where the problem of administration makes such a requirement difficult, the members of the staff teaching speech should be obliged to complete their training in the summer sessions of the University or Extension courses for teachers in the field.)

4. That teachers of speech should not rely for material on any one text book, but should use with judgment the four or five standard modern texts

5. That any new important principles that have not yet found their way into text books should be brought into the class room by the teacher. This refers particularly to the subjects which deal with the emotional and social adjustments of the students' personalities.

6. That every local high school should be brought into a consciousness of the value of speech training and that the cooperation of each teaching staff in the school should be secured for the promotion of better speech standards.

7. That in the teaching of speech, the method which may be broadly designated as the "project method", should be employed in preference to the method which proceeds from the development of individual technique.

8. That teachers of speech should have their attention specially called to the need of meeting problems of personal adjustment in the students -- toward this end the teacher should have training in Mental Hygiene and Speech Correction.

9. That teachers in the Department of Speech should be allowed necessary time for individual consultation with students.

10. That the course covering one half year's time should carry one half unit of credit.

11. That the work of the required speech course be given in the Second or Sophomore year of the High School curriculum and be prerequisite to all upper grade work in speech.

In March, 1932, in response to these recommendations, the State Board revised the rules and regulations (relative to Junior College and Secondary School programs of study) to include the "Attainment of a satisfactory mastery of Oral and Written English." This was of the nature of an enabling act to permit changes in courses of study.

In April the name of the Committee was changed to Superintendent Kersey's Committee on Speech Education. The broad term "Speech Education" includes training in voice, phonetics, oral reading, conversation, speech making, dramatics, debating, mental hygiene and speech correction (defects and disorders). As a logical result of our new perspective, we embarked on the preparation of coordinating courses of study covering the English requirements and every phase of speech training extending from the Kindergarten through the entire school system and teacher training institutions.

What our thoughts at this time were may be gathered from a statement developed by Professor Rowell, from ideas found in recent discussions of speech training: Teachers of the subject of speech (which subject has in the past gone under such names as Oral English, Oral Expression, Elocution, Public Speaking, the Speech Arts, etc.) have been quick to sense the significance of the new appraisal of the human power which they have been trying to train. They have reformulated the purposes of speech training to accord with this fuller appreciation of the function of speech in human living, and they have adjusted their teaching principles and methods in line with those purposes.

The result of this change in point of view and in the principles and methods relating to the subject has been this;

Speech is now taught as an important part of the affairs of life. Speech training is being carried into the public school, into the clinic, into the home, and into the nursery. Speech is thought of less in terms of its graces as such, and more in terms of its functional efficiency. There is no ignoring of the values of true oratory, of fine conversation, of distinguished speaking of whatever sort, or of any of the special speech arts. But all of these processes are taught in a way which keeps the student reminded that they are a part of life's most vital functions.

That such a change in the character of our speech training should have an important bearing on the question of the place of speech education in the school curriculum is easily manifest. It is important, nevertheless, that we single out a few facts about education, speech, and speech training which are particularly indicative of the educational values which inhere in this subject:

1. All educators recognize the principle that our primary interest is in teaching pupils and not subject-matter. Perhaps the most important aim in education is to bring out all the significant and valuable responses of which the personalities of our children are capable and to bring subject-matter to bear upon these vital responses. Speech training comes as near dealing directly with the personalities of the pupils as a school subject possibly can.

2. In present-day accounts of the human power to think, much is made of the fact that thinking is inextricably linked together with speech. Among psychologists, indeed, it is sometimes said that speech and thinking are in important respects identical in nature. But common sense itself is sufficient to tell us that we mould our thoughts through the medium of language and can do so in no other way. It would follow therefore, that poverty of speech must constitute a handicap to thought, and conversely, that excellence in speech must be an available aid to thought. Thus speech is more than an essential factor in the practical business of living; it is an essential factor in the business of thought.

3. Speech has much to do with releasing the normal adaptive creative powers of the personality: Among the phenomena which come frequently to the attention of mental hygienists is the fact that when people are unadjustable their unadjustability registers itself directly in the form of

poor or even defective speaking. Among the phenomena which come frequently to the attention of teachers of speech is the fact that the securing of normal speaking ability usually involves the securing of a more normal personality. Speech training, should, therefore, be looked upon as contributing importantly to the freeing of the powers of the personality.

4. Good speech contributes to the effectiveness of the normal personality in general and is of special value in many recognized professions in particular. Trained speech is undoubtedly one of the most important tools in man's life.

5. Speech training is transferable in an extremely high degree from the classroom to life itself. In the speech classroom we are teaching pupils what we all have to do almost constantly throughout our lives."

The Committee thus agreed that if the program were to be entirely effective it must begin in the early elementary grades during the habit forming years. In some parts of the State there are already established Pre-School and Nursery classes. Plans are being made to give speech instruction by means of games to the little ones, and to instruct the parents in the fundamentals of good speech as well as in the correct mental and emotional control. Child guidance clinics, physicians and psychologists, who make a special study of behavior problems in children, are constantly encountering situations in which parents are responsible for maladjustment reactions in children. Some of these behavior reactions are:

Causing the child to be nervous; to disobey; to have temper tantrums; to be dishonest; to become timid and fearful. Of course, no intelligent and thoughtful parent deliberately intends to injure a child, but even the most intelligent often do not consider all the angles of the problem involved in the relationship of parent and child. Both preventive and remedial methods should be given to parents, for it is always easier to prevent the development of unhealthy behavior than it is to correct it.

Perhaps this principle is best illustrated in the pamphlet for parents by Dr. Lawson G. Lowrey, Director, Child Guidance Clinic, National Committee for Mental Hygiene. Dr. Lowrey has the parent ask himself:

1. Do I cause my child to be nervous?

By: Being nervous myself?

Telling him about it so I may have his sympathy?

Constantly reminding him how nervous he is?

Telling other people in his presence how nervous and queer and odd he is?

Worrying over his health and habits?

Worrying him with my worries over him?

Coddling him physically and mentally?

Denying him independence of thought and action?

Expecting too much from him and driving him all the time?

2. Do I frighten my child so he becomes timid and fearful?

By: Threats of the "bogey-man"?

Threats of leaving him?

Threats of horrible punishments?

Telling him frightening stories?

Inflicting my fears and terrors on him?

Constant worry over his minor accidents, ailments, and habits?

It is from such environments that many of the nervous speech disorders arise. In such cases the conflicts arising from emotional maladjustment are expressed through the speech tract in spasmodic disturbances. These symptoms soon become fixed because both parents and child believe it to be a speech difficulty, after which the entire attention is placed upon the symptom with little regard for the causes that are producing it. As it continues, many personal and emotional associations gather around the defective speech idea. This results in what we call the "speech or word blockade," which must be replaced by the "fluency pattern." Our public school procedure for this has been carefully tested out over a period of seventeen years -- but I shall not have time to discuss it in this paper. The retraining necessary to correct this complicated result is often difficult and requires considerable time. Therefore the great need is for prevention wherever possible.

The speech education and co-ordination program will cover many phases of individual needs, including the artistic, scientific, mechanical and pathological (physical and emotional).

Whereas the acute states of fear and self-consciousness may be found in the nervous speech disorders, a large number of students are not able to adequately express themselves because of timidity, shyness, and a feeling of inferiority. A fully adequate program must include not only subject matter, but the changing of habits that govern these conditions. All this must be worked out in different steps which include: the providing of activities that promote confidence and self-control and the development of the poise that leads to a better adjustment to all the life situations. For older students the reconditioning is done through re-education, in which the student himself takes an active part.

For the last ten years a successful experiment covering this field has been worked out with 50,000 children in the public schools of Detroit, under a Department called "Human Engineering." Dr. Ricciardi and I have been much interested in this project. This work was started and is still maintained by Mr. W. J. Wright of that city. It was financed through a private source. Monthly lessons were given to large groups of students by a trained

staff. The subjects discussed were those that pertained to the every-day life and problems of the children. They were presented in such a way as to appeal to their reason. Then followed their desire to co-operate because they were convinced that conduct follows definite laws, such as that of "cause and effect," namely: That if they decided on certain conduct, a result or effect was sure to follow. They were shown how to look at the "pricetags" on every life experience and to decide whether the experience was worth the price to be paid. Some of these topics discussed were: lying, cheating, shirking responsibility, discourtesy, truth, cause and effect, habits, mastership and self control, our value to society, service and many other character forming ideas. Results from this public school experiment have proved that ethical subjects can be not only understood, but worked out intelligently in the lives of children ranging from the fourth grade through High School. This influence extended into the homes to a marked degree.

The same general objectives were agreed upon for both elementary and secondary levels. These were as outlined by the Elementary School Committee of Northern California as follows:

1. To impress upon parents, teachers, and pupils a knowledge that speech is basically interwoven with the integrated development of the individual.
2. To impress upon teachers the principles of Mental Hygiene involved in the teaching of reading, dramatics, and speech improvement.
3. To develop in the individual an acceptable standard of speech, adequate for every social and vocational demand.

The Specific objectives were:

1. To stress the importance of the best physical and mental basis for speech.
2. To develop in the student an appreciation of the flow of good speech.
3. To develop that type of speech in the child which will
  - a. Not attract unfavorable notice to itself.
  - b. Which is understood by the greatest number of people in every part of the country.
  - c. Which does not announce his birthplace nor consign him to any particular class.

These specific objectives are to be achieved through attention to physical, emotional and social adjustment.

For Teacher Training Institutions, the Committee unanimously passed the following resolution:

Whereas: No standards of excellence in habits of voice or speech among

our children can possibly be attained unless their teachers by example and precept inculcate such standards from the beginning of, and throughout the years of elementary and secondary study, therefore be it

Resolved; that the Chairman of this Committee request the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to present to the State Board of Education the following recommendation:

That the State Board of Education require of all candidates for certification as teachers in the public schools of this State, the satisfaction of a definite standard of excellence in voice and speech. To satisfy this requirement all candidates must pass a speech test to be given by the speech departments of teacher training institutions, in conjunction with the departments of education in such institutions.

The procedure for such speech test should be uniform throughout teacher training institutions, and should consist of a preliminary diagnosis of voice, speech faults with recommendations for remedial work, early in the candidates' training, to be followed by such further tests as are necessary to satisfy the examining body of sufficient improvement.

Both preliminary and subsequent diagnosis should trace the following general outline:

A. Sentences should be chosen containing all the different speech sounds, which the student should read; and on this basis a partial diagnosis should be made of Voice quality and Diction.

B. A brief connected passage should be read to test the range and strength of the voice, and

C. The diagnosis should be completed on the basis of conversation with the student which should reveal the speech habits of daily conversation.

State and National surveys have revealed the appalling number of children and adults, running into millions, handicapped by serious defects and disorders of speech, to say nothing of the vast unsurveyed numbers functioning everywhere inadequately because of poor speech.

At this point, I should like to mention the effort our Bureau of Correction of Speech Defects and Disorders has made to meet the needs of the former, the Speech handicapped group. At the close of the 1932 biennium, our records show that classes in the correction of speech defects and disorders have been established in 67 cities and towns, representing 34 counties with 115 teachers in charge.

The total enrollment in the speech correction classes was reported as 22,121. Of these, 7,955 were enrolled in the Nervous Speech Disorder group (Stammering, Stuttering, Nervous Hesitation and Cluttering); the remainder, 14,166 in Articulation Defects (Sound Substitution, Infantile Speech, Delayed Speech, Oral Inactivity). Practically all of these cases were severe enough to be classified as very definite handicaps. Our trained speech teachers corrected 2,759 of the Nervous Speech Disorders and 7,189 of the Articulation Defects. Of the remainder of those enrolled, the majority were reported as greatly improved. (In most places we maintain a five year

follow-up plan to check on the cases reported corrected).

The activities of the staff of the Bureau of Correction of Speech Defects and Disorders, consisting of the Chief and two Field Assistants, includes conferences with School Superintendents, Teachers, Principals, Institution officials, Supervisors, parents, nurses and Child Guidance Clinics. Addresses were made to various groups, such as Parent-Teacher Associations, Welfare organizations, Service Clubs and Teachers Institutes. (I have maintained a clinic for the nervous speech disorders at San Quentin, the State Penitentiary, during the last three years for the purpose of making case studies).

Those working on our Speech Education Committee can foresee most gratifying and far-reaching results that will accrue from a well coordinated course of study. Especially will this be felt in the Speech Departments of Colleges and Universities where they can begin their courses on a much higher level, when the fundamentals have been thoroughly mastered in the elementary and secondary public school departments, as well as in the teacher training institutions.