Teachers and Children of our Elementary Schools Need Speech Education

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TEACHERS AND CHILDREN OF OUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

NEED SPEECH EDUCATION

by

Gertrude Lester Hall

A paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education, in the Graduate School of the Central Washington College of Education

August, 1952
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

My experiences as a classroom teacher probably have not been greatly different from most teachers. The beginning of each school year has brought a new group of children to my classroom and with each successive group have come those children whose speech has made it difficult and even impossible for them to participate in their social and educational situations.

These children have been the same in general appearances and anxious expressions as any other children in their schoolroom group. Their differences came only when it was necessary for them to speak. Immediately they became a separate group, revealing their handicap in various ways. Some have been shy, using only a smile to substitute for words, others have looked to a classmate friend to speak for them, but the little newcomer, in a strange situation has remained alone, still and frightened against that time when he knows that he must attempt speech and thus reveal his difference.

The first day of that school year when I met with thirty-eight fourth graders and found there were five whose speech\(^1\) deviated so far from that of their classmates that each called attention to itself,

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1. See Appendix
I realized that they had a need to be met for which their teacher had no training. It was apparent that their greatest educational need had not been adequately met during their first three years of formal schooling and without additional knowledge, their fourth grade teacher could do nothing more for them than had already been done. I held a degree from a teacher's college but with it had come no instruction as to what to do to help children who could not adequately express themselves.

These were real children, with a real problem in need of adult help. For a teacher not to attempt to fulfill that need was as unthinkable as refusing to give help in reading, writing, or arithmetic.

As the first school days went by interest and concern over the problem became a curiosity as well. Could something be done? If so, what, and how was the procedure to be carried out? There was a realization that my responsibility was not to just those five alone, but to their classmates who must learn to live and share with them, to those who had gone through classes before them and to those who, I had every reason to believe, would be coming after them. Knowledge with which to help them must be sought.

Observation of children from other classrooms and discussions with teachers revealed that although there were more children with defective speech in that particular fourth grade room than was
usually found, speech problems\(^1\) were in each classroom through the school.

It was discovered too, that among the teachers no one had had training in the handling of speech problems. No one seemed to know whether or not it was even possible to give help. The teachers were sympathetic in their interest of these handicapped children by saying that it was too bad something couldn't be done, for there were always a few "who had trouble" in every class. It was suggested that I try to get them to "say the sounds and to talk slowly". I was cautioned to not be overly concerned, for some children would outgrow the difficulty and in the meanwhile they were always good little workers, never causing a "mite of trouble".

Obviously, other teacher help, despite their sympathetic understanding, was not the solution. The immediate need appeared to be best answered through a college extension night class in Elementary Speech Education which was starting in a nearby city the following week.

It was here I first learned that in modern educational theory speech education is a three point program which should consist of the removal of defects, refinements in manner of speaking and mastery of the uses of speech in every day living. The first two are referred to

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1. See Appendix Table I
as speech correction or improvement while the third places emphasis on the important part which speech plays in human relationships. There is no fixed line of demarcation between these as they operate in actual practice. Each is important and each is to a degree dependent upon the other. A classroom program, to be complete, must provide for the needs of the speech defective, supply knowledge and techniques for the mechanics of speech improvement to meet cultural demands, and provide the experiences which make for desirable socialization.

It was in this class that I first came to know and appreciate a philosophy of education for dealing with speech defective children and gained a knowledge of remedial and preventive techniques to be used in the classroom.

It was here also that I first became aware of the magnitude and seriousness of speech education as a challenge confronting our elementary schools. Speech handicapped children are sufficiently numerous to cause concern in all schools, where teachers are not trained to understand and meet their needs. Within the past two decades studies have been made which report that speech defectives comprise the largest single group of handicapped school children.¹ The estimate is fairly well accepted that approximately 10 percent of the children in our elementary schools are in need of speech

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re-education. Of this number 96 percent are not receiving it.²

Finding that much could and should be done in the classroom for the speech defective child, the problem broadened in scope to find why speech education had not been and was not a part of our daily curricula. I found that many fine books have been written to aid the classroom teacher, yet, with so many children going through our schools unaided it was apparent that these books were not known or were not being used by classroom teachers in meeting the needs of their pupils.

The surveys and studies reported in printed literature or speech education were either on a national basis or of an area somewhat remote from our state. The element common to them all was the startling number of children needing help in contrast to the extremely few receiving it. Could it be that such regrettable conditions existed in our own state and local area? Could we as classroom teachers, through a lack of knowledge, be guilty to such a great extent of not fulfilling the basic philosophy of education, that is, adjusting education to meet the needs of each child?

With these questions to be answered the purpose of this paper was established. The problem was no longer limited to gaining knowledge and techniques with which to give help to the children of my own classroom. The purpose had become threefold: First, to attempt to understand why speech did not have a major place in our

1. Ibid., p. 193.
school curriculum, secondly, to stimulate in the minds of teachers, principals and superintendents the recognition of their personal responsibility for setting up a program which would provide adequately for speech development beginning with the child's first day of school and continuing on through his entire academic career. Third, to establish in my own mind the relative need of speech education in our own geographical area, to see if conditions there are comparable to those reported for the other parts of our nation, and to attempt to determine other classroom teachers' opinion regarding the need of speech education in our classrooms.

The first two questions could be solved by study and writing, while the third, though not extensive in scope required correspondence, interviews, and a questionnaire type of survey which was made in ten of the urban and rural schools of western Clark County.¹

¹. See Appendix for sample questionnaire and Tables II, III.
Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF SPEECH EDUCATION

To understand why more than one million of our school age children are not receiving needed attention in speech training it is necessary to look into the history of our culture as it relates to the handicapped and more specifically into our educational development. As is common with any type of difficulty no correction can be made until the error is first recognized as being one which can and should be worked with.

It has taken centuries to reach the state of civilization where people look upon the handicapped as a challenge not as a burden to our society. Van Riper\(^1\) comments that primitive man tolerated no weakness. The struggle for survival prompted rejection of those members who could not materially aid. Rejection took many forms. When in the history of civilization the handicapped was no longer offered as sacrifice or left alone where survival was impossible, they were looked upon as being possessed of evil spirits and still later were objects of ridicule and mirth. "The Bible clearly reflects those early rejection attitudes. Disabilities were regarded as divine punishment for sin. A normal person could invoke similar

\(^1\) Van Riper, *Speech Correction, Principles and Methods*, p. 5.
punishment merely by associating with those who had thus incurred the wrath of God. ¹

The present cultural reaction to the handicapped is doubtless an outgrowth of religion. In the seventh century A. D. the Mohammedans insisted on kindliness and consideration for all men. With the rise of the middle class more attention was given them, but it was one of pity. It was the Sisters of Charity who first began to realize and provide a means for the handicapped to be useful. They established the first college in 1560 where work was provided which gave them contentment. It is reported that special education for school children with speech defects was first started in Potsdam, Germany in 1886. The movement spread from there through Europe and thence to the United States. In our nation the Boston Industrial School for the crippled and deformed, was the first true training school to recognize the handicapped persons need for usefulness and it was founded as recently as 1893. In 1908 the first public school class in speech correction was organized in New York City.

The disability of the crippled or blind is far more obvious than is that of the defective in speech, they were therefore the first to receive the understanding appreciation of the general public.

Public opinion in the responsibility of providing total security for all children has been a strong contributing factor in focusing

¹ Ibid., p. 5.
attention to the needs of the speech handicapped. Yet, it is necessary to face the reality that it has not been altogether the kindness and consciousness of mankind which has prompted attention to this less fortunate group. The speech handicaps of otherwise fit men during World War I brought some awareness of the problem. The increasing need of manpower for military service of the past decade has caused attention to be drawn upon the needs of developing the potentialities of every individual, regardless of handicap. In this large segment of our population it is recognized that the percentage is high for those who with proper training can largely overcome what otherwise might be a life long handicap.

Very little factual information on the handicapped was available until President Hoover called a White House Conference in 1930 and gave that conference the definite problem of studying the needs and existing conditions of the handicapped. A very forward step in bringing attention to the educational needs of this group was taken when the summary of the committee findings was released. They "were astounding to a nation of people who had looked upon the handicapped in terms of the few with whom each citizen comes in contact in his own immediate environment." This startling report awakened the leaders of our nation's educational policies to the reality of the speech handicapped.

The National Office of Education immediately reported a tremendous need for research and for teamwork at the district, county, and state levels in an attempt to improve the lot of the handicapped. Elsie Martens, speaking for the national department stated, "The Office of Education wants to see the speech of all children improved as a part of the special education program; it wants also to see children with serious defects of speech given all the special instruction they need." This requires, she further pointed out, the need for distinguishing between those slightly handicapped which can be cared for in the classroom and the more serious defective requiring the services of the clinician.

Various states began to attack the problem in their legislatures. It was quickly discovered that no profession or agency was trained or prepared to take care of these defectives. They had been relatively overlooked by the medical profession, psychologists, and by educators. An investigation into pre-medical education and medical school training internship and experience the country over showed little required in the study of the speech function and its disorders. The same condition existed in the training of clinical psychologists. As a result very few were qualified to deal with speech defects.

The agency common to all children is the schools. Here again,

the condition of unpreparedness prevailed. The educational profession, in the classrooms and in the colleges, had given little more attention to the problem than had the physicians or psychologists.

One professional group had been organized for the purpose of meeting the needs of the speech handicapped. That is the organization now called the American Speech and Hearing Association. It was this body that had caused a new profession to come into existence. The speech pathologist, or correctionist, or therapist as he may be referred to is neither physician, psychologist, or classroom teacher.

The call for this new worker came from all sections of the nation. Because of the extensive training required, the demand could not be met. By legislative enactment, through which funds were made available to public schools for the setting up of speech correction programs, the larger metropolitan areas quickly absorbed all available clinicians. There are now approximately two thousand¹ speech correction workers in this country. It is estimated that a complete program would require about fifteen thousand.² The probability of supplying this number is remote.

To gain a clear picture of speech education as it is in our schools at the present time is quite impossible. It is an area in

2. Ibid.
which there is need for much further research. Available information
is spotty and incomplete.

Some information at the national level is given by Sister M.
Cyprian Spradling\(^1\) in her questionnaire type of survey made in 1948.
The purpose of her work was to attempt to determine the state
requirements for speech teachers. Response was received which
revealed that twenty-one states reported specific requirements, four
states required the same as the American Speech and Hearing Associa-
tion, and nineteen states had no specific requirements.

In a 1946 survey\(^2\) of the practices of forty-three cities with
100,000 or more population the inadequacies of speech education was
found to be general. The number of children needing help was
approximately 10 percent of the enrollment while only an estimated
2 percent were receiving the service. State reimbursement has been
felt to be an impetus in the organization of speech programs but
this survey revealed that there were about as many cities carrying
on the program without state aid as there were those being benefitted
by financial aid.

The National Council of Teachers of English\(^3\) are recognizing an

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Requirements for Speech Correctionists", Quarterly Journal of
2. Rutherford, Bernice; Read, Lillian; Myfanwy, Chapman, "Digest of
Study of Speech Correction in Cities of 100,000 and Over", Quarterly
3. "Speech In the Full School Program", Elementary English, April, 1951,
pp. 201-204.
increased need for focusing attention on speech education. Through committees they have been at work for several years collecting recommendations from teachers as to what techniques the junior and senior high school teachers can use.

California was the first western state to be mindful of the need for special provision for speech handicapped children. Centers for training have been maintained there since 1915. "Data from reports of 159 speech correction teachers in 32 counties for the school year 1947-48 show a total enrollment of 54,913 in speech correction classes in California public schools."¹ With this information it would seem that California has gone far in providing for the needs of its speech defective school children.

Undoubtedly, the most complete picture of current general conditions in the west is found in the 1952 report of the Western Speech Association.²

In an effort to gain factual information concerning the importance of speech education in eleven western states this Association spent two years doing a questionnaire type of survey which was answered by 1,225 public school teachers and administrators, seventy-six colleges,

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¹ Gifford, Mrs. Mabel Farrington, "Speech Correction Comes of Age in California". Western Speech, January 1949, p. 19.
and the eleven state departments of education. The study attempted to gain information as to what the speech needs of teachers are, what state credential requirements are and what colleges and universities are doing to meet these needs and requirements.

It was found that none of the state departments of the eleven western states require speech training of prospective teachers or administrators. Arizona, California, Nevada and Oregon require some training of candidates for special credentials in speech correction.

Teachers and administrators were asked to rank a number of standard course titles according to their value to the teacher candidate. Speech Improvement in the Classroom was checked by both Administrators and teachers as being the most valuable course. Group Discussion Techniques and Speech Correction for Children received second and third rating respectively.

The tabulated results placed emphasis not upon the standard fundamentals of public speaking and interpretation but on the need for the prospective teacher to acquire those skills, techniques and attitudes that would enable her to:

1. Improve the normal speech of children in the classroom, particularly by integrating speech activities throughout the curriculum.

2. Correct or assist in the correction of defective speech, especially in the elementary school classroom; and

3. Utilize group discussion techniques, especially in the
secondary school social studies program.

More than half of the colleges and universities have their own requirement that prospective teachers take some kind of course in the field of speech art. "Little is being done, however, to provide the additional kind of training recommended by administrators and teachers which would help the teacher to teach speech in the classroom."1 ...The area of speech training is "largely neglected by institutions providing teacher-training in the Western States."2

In defense of those colleges which offer courses to aid teachers in teaching speech it must be said that only 10 to 50 percent of prospective teachers elect speech courses. The reason for this is easily understood, however, when time is taken to look more closely into the requirements of teacher training curricula. Beginning teachers have not been made aware of the need. They tend to avoid these classes of a specialized nature. Experienced teachers who return to summer training sessions find that required work takes up their full time, that such courses for which they feel a need are looked upon as a highly specialized nature requiring pre-requisites for admission. There are few survey type courses known which would give the so-called non-specialist acquaintance with the possibilities of what can be done in the regular classroom.

1. Ibid., p. 7.
2. Ibid., p. 9.
3. Ibid., p. 9.
Looking more specifically at the program in our own state it is found that the Twenty Eighth Session of the legislature meeting in 1943 created the division for handicapped children and therein made provision for their education.¹

In the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction was vested the responsibility to appoint a supervisor whose duty should be to supervise and coordinate the program of special aid for the children requiring such services throughout the school districts of the state. He works in cooperation with the County Offices of School Superintendents and health officers, district officers and teachers, in conducting the program.

It is the stated responsibility of the school districts to give aid and special attention to handicapped children to the extent of its facilities. Special aid, equipment and materials may be purchased and special teachers employed. Expenditures may be reimbursed partially or wholly by the Superintendent of Public Instruction out of funds appropriated from the current state school fund for that purpose.

As the problem of meeting these needs of the speech defective has been worked with, knowledge has increased. The multiple problems of psychology, social relationships, and personality development; the

recognition that speech defects vary in degree of severity that all school children will be benefited by speech education has brought educators in our state to appreciate the key position to be held by the classroom teacher.

Accepting the present day concept, that much of the answer to the problem lies in a carefully planned classroom program, the University of Washington reports its plan of attacking the problem by taking personalized service and instruction into the public schools. As a part of the University's general policy of providing aid to the state as a whole, the Department of Speech provides one full time instructor-consultant for the work.

Service is initiated in a school system through an invitation from the superintendent. The Consultant visits the school, meets with its personnel and leaders, helps to analyze the needs and directs the planning of the type of in-service work to be carried out. Experience has shown that this service generally follows one of three forms:

1. Curriculum study and planning where the basic procedure is for the setting up and implementing of an adequate program in speech training for the entire school.

2. General speech education for classroom teachers. In this area the consultant "gives guidance and instruction in planning

1. Nelson, Oliver W., "An In-Service Program in Speech for the Public Schools", Western Speech, May 1951.
and carrying out speech activities appropriate for the various grade levels or subject matter areas represented."

3. Semi-clinical service. "Here the objective is primarily to assist teachers and parents in guiding certain children with speech defects toward better speech." Following an interview, the consultant outlines steps for appropriate treatment. Written suggestions and materials are given to be carried out by the teacher and the parent.

The service is financed jointly by the school districts and the inservice department of the University. It started in 1946 when the services were taken to a few schools. In the school year 1949-50 twenty-seven different schools were reported to have received an average of six days of consultant services.

The response to this plan from teachers and administrators is reported by Nelson to be encouraging. "There is evidence that this field work has done a great deal to extend and improve speech training facilities in many of the public schools of our state." It has been the stimulating force for some schools to develop comprehensive speech programs. The work has also been the means through which classroom teachers have become acquainted with the potential of speech education and have enrolled in extension and in-service training classes.

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 34.
A report of the exact number of speech and hearing instructors employed by school districts in the state of Washington is not available. At the end of the 1950-51 school year, approximately forty-three were reported in claims against the physically handicapped fund. It is estimated that an additional forty are also employed in local school districts.
Chapter III
WHY SPEECH EDUCATION IS NOT A PART OF THE SCHOOL PROGRAM

Improvement of college curricula, legislative action, and adoption of state policy, still has not brought speech education to the children of our schools which are located away from metropolitan areas.

Establishing a planned program of speech service in the urban and rural elementary schools has posed two major problems. First, traditional thinking about speech development in children has resulted in an unawareness of the number of children in schools who have defective speech. Teachers and administrators fail to recognize the role which their schools might be able to play in developing good speech habits and in correcting many problems and defects. Secondly, certain fallacies exist in the minds of both the public and the school personnel. These must be removed through educative effort before a functional speech program can be established.

"It is not uncommon to find cases where the child has been encouraged to continue his incorrect speech because some adult responsible for his development thinks 'it is cute'. What may be cute for a three year old may be a heartache for the seven year old."¹

Another common misunderstanding expressed by adults is that if children are just left alone they will outgrow their difficulty. "It is true that maturation has been the principle factor in the correction of many cases,"¹ but there are many times when it fails. Graham points out further that many of the corrections of maturation are over such a period of time to cause social and emotional maladjustment.

Johnson² has explained the position of the speech handicapped child to be difficult in society because society itself lacks understanding. Speech pathologists have found as a result of much survey that speech defective children are as much like other children in every other way as we could possibly expect individual children to be alike. They have found the same differences in school ability, intelligences, likes and dislikes in groups of children with normal speech as in groups of children with defective speech. Therefore, a speech defect is a specific kind of a problem which any child might have had.

He further states that the tendency for people to think that the speech handicapped has a different personality from other children is unjust. It is true that they do appear to differ in many respects but that is due to a sensitiveness because other people do not understand them or their problems.

¹. Ibid.
Van Riper\textsuperscript{1} states: "Every handicap has an emotional fraction of shame, fear or frustration, the heritage of centuries of cruelty and neglect."

Lack of recognition and neglect are but two of the factors still retarding speech correction. A third is the realization only recently that speech is a tool, as such its proper use must be taught if its greatest potentialities are to be developed.

Business and world affairs have been strong influences in prompting this present concept. Civilization is in a cultural period which demands thinking and planning together. Effective verbal communication is an increasingly essential part of our humanity. Business has made a plea for young men and women who have the ability to express ideas easily and accurately, who can handle themselves well in group situations, who have the personalities to achieve civic responsibility and economic efficiency. There is no more adequate way to develop these abilities in individuals than through a planned program in speech education. Such personalities, it can be clearly seen, cannot be an outgrowth of frustrations and complexes created by speech handicaps.

The facts seem to reveal that in carrying out the slogan, "Education of the Whole Child", our schools are guilty of not recognizing the one greatest need common to all, that is, speech.

\textsuperscript{1} Van Riper, C., op. cit., p. 5.
The degree to which speech is useful to the individual depends upon its freedom from defects, the extent to which can be used effectively in all situations and whether or not the voice, diction and enunciation meet the cultural standards. It is time for all people responsible for educational guidance of others to realize that these areas are not just acquired, they must be taught and not one emphasized to the neglect of the other.

Our schools of the past looked upon speech education as a naturally acquired function, the same as walking and growing. People merely used the ability they had as it had naturally developed. Speech was looked upon as an art possessed by only a few and used for swaying public opinion controlling action and providing entertainment. "Nothing constructive was done for stuttering and disorders of voice and articulation in the days of our grandfathers, but that is neither reason or excuse for us now." Today we know better.

Chapter IV

THE PLACE OF SPEECH EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL PROGRAM

Werner comments: "This is a new age. It is a talking age. Should not the schools make their curricula fit it and prepare people for it."¹

An estimate made by the Educational Policies Commission of the National Educational Association states that speech is the basis of 90² percent of all our communication.

Our school curricula should be so designed to include speech training for every student not just to the 5³ percent whose speech presents sufficient handicaps to make them eligible for the services of the therapist.

Ollie Backus states: "It seems wise for us to accept the fact that from one-sixth to one-fourth of the elementary school population

¹ Werner, Lorna Shagren, Speech In The Elementary School, p. 6. Quote from C. Rasmussen, "By His Word Shall You Know Him".
⁴ Backus, Ollie, Speech In Education, p. 22.
have speech that is in some measure defective."

What is done about speech and especially speech disorders in our school is of the utmost importance to the pupils as individuals and to the society which they help to create as they become adult citizens.

Graham¹ expresses the thought that the improvement of exceptional children is largely an educational problem for the schools are the agency that has contact with all children. He states further:

All children are entitled to equal consideration at the hands of the school. Under our system of government it is the right of every child to receive the type of education which will best prepare him to become a self-sustaining member of society. The individual with a speech impairment has an unequal opportunity in competing with others in many vocations. The home and school can make a cooperative attack on the problems that concern the welfare of the children and speech correction is best achieved by this united effort.

Along with the other authorities on the subject Van Riper², too, places the responsibility for speech education on the school.

Some agency of society must accept the responsibility for seeing that these millions of speech handicapped individuals receive the rehabilitation they so urgently need...Parents do not have the information or the teaching ability that is required. Our public school system is about the only organization large enough to do the job. It can employ trained teachers and it has the child during those years when speech correction can be most effective...It has the contact with the colleges and universities whose research and teacher training facilities are so vital to adequate

2. Van Riper, op. cit., p. 12.
therapy. The basic philosophy of our public schools is education according to the students' need.

With our rapidly expanding economic structure it is a fact self-evident that personal contact, accomplished principally through speech, is of more economic and social importance than it was even a generation ago.

It is apparent that children neglected by society tend to develop other handicaps. They become emotionally and socially maladjusted.

Wood¹ states:

From the standpoint of personality nothing contributes as much as good speech—nothing detracts as much as halting or defective speech. We all like to lead effective, confident and useful lives. What chance has the speech defective? Of those who have seemingly succeeded in spite of the handicap we might say—"how much more could he have done had the hindrance been relieved or removed?"

Backus³, speaking from her experiences of many years as a classroom teacher and then as a therapist, gives a clear picture in her statement:

The evils developing from a speech defect can be recognized not only in terms of economic waste caused by school failure and unemployment, but also—and what is more important—in terms of thwarted ambitions,

undeveloped capacity for service, and human unhappiness. It is evident that the public schools should assume responsibility for the removal of speech defects.

Defective speech in the school child has a detrimental effect upon his learning of the tool subjects of reading, writing, and spelling. Studies have been made to show how much a child is handicapped in his regular school work due to speech disabilities; but it is apparent that the child in the primary grade who pronounces an "r" like a "wr" is confronted with learning difficulties every time he tries to spell such words as run, won, roll. He is the victim of confusion that results from hearing sounds one way and producing them another.

According to Backus children suffering from defective speech only are potentially normal individuals. They need specialized instruction, but can otherwise pursue the regular school curriculum. If speech now had its rightful place among the language arts in the curriculum, the classroom teacher would feel that the correction of many speech defects would be as important as helping a child with his reading difficulties.

A general review of literature in the field shows an increasing emphasis in speech training on the secondary, college, and adult

education levels. Less progress has been made in the elementary schools.¹

Yet, according to Werner² it seems obvious that speech training during the early years of a child's life is necessary for the establishment of desirable speaking habits. By the time a student reaches high school or college, he requires long and tedious re-training to correct his poor speech. Speech defects which were just beginning in the elementary school, have then become well established habits. Many of these speech handicaps have already caused the child's personality maladjustments which are due to his feeling of inadequacy.

Speech correction and remedial work belong in the elementary school; speech arts in the secondary school. When speech correction is carried over to the high school it becomes a kind of futile mop-up.³

Van Riper⁴ points out that from the standpoint of practical economy alone, speech education has its place in our school curricula. "The average speech defective is retarded one year in school because of his handicap, and the over-all educational expenditure is, because of the retardation, greater. In terms of dollars and cents alone, it

2. Ibid., p. 6.
would be economical to provide speech-correction services in the public schools." He states: the comparative figures for the education of the handicapped show that the actual cost for the caring for the speech-defective child is comparatively low. Yet all others receive far more educational attention than does the speech handicapped. "...the future economic gain in turning the speech handicapped from economic misfits into productive self-sufficient individuals far outweighs the trifling expense." 1

1. Ibid.
Chapter V

THE PLACE OF THE CLASSROOM TEACHER IN THE PROGRAM

It is the classroom teacher who can put the rehabilitation of speech in its rightful place in public school education and thus make available to all children with defective speech that equality of opportunity which has so far been denied to many. Backus comments further: "It is true of speech, just as it has always been true of any subject matter field that its actual value depends upon the ability and skill of the teacher."2

It is the clear responsibility of every classroom teacher to do all that she can to meet the speech needs of the children in her classroom. As expressed by Johnson3 every classroom teacher teaches speech whether she realizes it or not. By her own speech and the attitudes of listening which she creates, she encourages certain patterns of speech and discourages others. From the point of view of speech correction she provides the atmosphere in which the speech handicapped child is demoralized or is helped not only to improve his speech but also to learn to accept the defect, to live with it, to grow as a person in spite of it.

1. Backus, Ollie, op. cit., p. 27.
2. Ibid., p. 15.
Classroom teachers who are good for the speech defectives are good for the other children too. It is readily agreed that a good teacher must be first of all a real person. "The mere knowledge of methods has never been a worthy substitute for character, personality scholarship and human interests." The truly effective teacher possesses the personality to stimulate the speech defective as well as the normal speaking child. She shows calmness and poise in her manner. She acts as if everyone's ideas were important and worth hearing. She gives the impression that there is plenty of time. No striking deviation noticeably shocks her. The child realizes and appreciates her understanding and emotional stability.

The teacher understands psychological factors which influence speech defects. She understands that her first duty is to accept every child as he is, speech defects and all. She seeks ways to make the child successful and thus improve at his own rate. If the defect is extreme she helps the other children to understand the difficulty and to accept it as it is, expecting no better speech than the child is capable of producing. The defective's attempt at speech is rewarded with approval as given to any normal speaking child.

"Most of the help that a teacher can give to her speech

1. Backus, Ollie L., op. cit., p. 16.
2. Hahn, Elsie S., N.E.A. "What the Classroom Teacher Can Do In Speech Re-Education", The Role of Speech In The Elementary School, p. 56.
handicapped pupils can and should be given by doing those things which increase her effectiveness as a teacher.¹

Consistent with this point of view, Backus has written:

The teacher's own speech is a very important factor in establishing a standard of articulation and diction for her students. It must be free from all defects, must present an acceptable standard of voice, articulation pronunciation and diction, and must be used effectively—and for good ends—in personal, professional and civic relationships.²

She should know how the sounds are articulated so that she can understand what errors the child is making and be able to help with the difficulties. She should be able to demonstrate and teach correct sounds when the need arises without being overly precise or tense. To the individual with a serious handicap, the teacher seeks only to give him greater security until special help or knowledge is available to meet his need. Since every classroom teacher is in practice a teacher of speech, she must have training which will qualify her to identify and describe defective speech.

The classroom teacher need not be a specialist but she must know the basic principles and how to help children. She must appreciate the need for a planned, thorough, and regular program of speech education. She must realize that children do not acquire good speech just by imitation or by chance. Children who are able to

¹ Johnson, Wendell, Speech Handicapped School Children, p. 17.
² Backus, Ollie L., op. cit., p. 16.
express themselves in a clear, friendly and concise manner are those children who have experienced a clear cut, well-planned program made by an interested, understanding and trained teacher.

The secret of developing good easy speaking in children is the same as for the achievement of any other important object in education—it is simply an interesting classroom program.

In writing of those classroom practices felt to be most valuable aids or guideposts in developing a good classroom program Catharine Carmody\(^1\) gives the following suggestions:

Listen carefully to the children's patterns of speech and try to determine the needs. Listen to your own speech with a critical attitude and experiment with methods for improvement. Together with the children develop a speech consciousness by listening to radio speeches and guest speakers. Work out cooperatively, standards for good speech. Provide time, a minute or two a day, for individual help for children with slight speech defects...in all activity make speech a happy, natural experience. Help children, whatever their difficulty, to feel comfortable and secure in their speaking efforts. Cultivate an attitude of sympathy, understanding and optimism.

Carmody\(^2\) comments further on the role of the teacher:

The teacher can have a diagnostic attitude based on as much scientific information as is possible to gather, She can become speech conscious. She can enrich the opportunities for speech activities. She can provide

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2. Ibid., p. 31.
rich sharing experiences in expression by encouraging pupil planning. She can treat each child as a human being, realizing that mistakes are common to everyone and that nagging or over emphasis, is detrimental to health attitudes and growth. She can above all have fun with speech, and keep her sense of humor an invaluable asset when the going is tough."

Johnson\(^1\) states: "In a thousand ways, a hundred times a day, the classroom teacher can work toward objectives of good speech without working overtime and without adding the tasks of a professional speech correctionist to her other duties."

In schools which have no corrective speech program, it is possible that the community and school officials are unaware of the nature and possibilities of speech correction. Here again the teacher's responsibility is in making them aware of existing conditions to inform them and to arouse their interest.

Often parents do not realize speech peculiarities in their children because they have become so accustomed to hearing them. According to Backus, this means that the teacher must become acquainted with the parents and help them to understand their child's problem.

1. The prevalence of speech defects.
2. Their effects on the child's school progress and personality development.
3. The fact that many defects will not be outgrown.
4. The possibility of correcting most types of defects.
5. The need for rehabilitation at an early age.

\(^{1}\) Johnson, Wendell., Speech Handicapped School Children, p. 58.
6. The idea that the presence of a speech defect is no disgrace and that it is not a casualty related to mental retardation.¹

Yes, a teacher who is truly interested in speech improvement will go beyond her classroom duties to bring about speech developing activities for the child. She will seek any specialized help which may be available—medical or dental care, summertime speech clinic, recreation centers, children's organizations and other teachers in the school. She will carefully study each case, knowing that determining the cause is the first step in treatment.

A conscientious teacher will want to exercise precaution, yet she is not conservative to the point of failing to give or seek corrective help to all who need it. It is her responsibility to see that each child receives that diagnosis which is required for adequate therapy.

To help the classroom teacher better understand those cases with which she may safely work and those for which clinical help should be sought, Ollie Backus² offers the following suggestions:

1. The classroom teacher should be able to spot possible hard-of-hearing cases and make arrangements for individual audiometer tests for each.

2. She can safely work with the ordinary 'run-of-the-mill' articulatory cases. She should have in mind, however, the many possible causes of

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2. Ibid., p. 87.
such disorders, so that she can arrange for diagnosis for all concerning whom there is any doubt. Children with only a lisp or defective r or l, or k-g, can usually be treated without diagnosis by a specialist.

3. Foreign accent should ordinarily offer no diagnostic problems.

4. Repaired cleft-palate cases need not be sent to a clinic, unless the teacher feels the need of advice about methods for more effective treatment.

5. Unrepaired cleft-palate cases should be sent to a speech clinic for subsequent medical referral.

6. A specialist should be consulted about all stuttering cases.

7. A specialist should be consulted for all cases suspected of neurological involvement.

8. Vocal defects of quality should receive careful study and diagnosis. Simple deviations in melody, volume, or rate can be handled by the teacher.

9. Suspected psychological cases should be sent to the speech clinic for possible psychiatric referral.

10. The teacher should be wary of branding a child as feebleminded. Speech cases are not infrequently branded as such. The child may be suffering from dysphasia, may simply appear retarded because of his handicap, or may be somewhat retarded but yet educable. Do not rely very heavily upon group intelligence tests. To be significant, an individual test should be given by a trained psychological examiner. For seriously handicapped children, even such test results must be considered tentative.

In seeking and giving help a classroom teacher is limited only by her own resourcefulness. Integrating speech activity with every part of every day's program is effectively answering the needs of many children. It must not be regarded as a formal subject, nor can it be only incidental where there is no consistency in its emphasis.
"This type of teaching requires greater skill and more careful planning on the part of the instructor, but it is infinitely more productive...\(^1\)

The opportunity for corrective work must be worked into odd places made available in an already crowded program. Time is found by the teacher who really sees the need to make the program work. Children who are not having any difficulty are almost always puzzled by noticeable differences in the speech of other children. The handicapped child is under pressure which he often cannot bear in play-talking activities, soon the tendency is to exclude himself or to be excluded by others. Sometimes he is included but is teased and then he does what he feels is necessary to "hold his own."

It is less of a problem for any teacher to take a few minutes a day to correct a speech defect in a relatively short time than to be burdened during an entire year with a child who is unable to participate normally in school activities.\(^2\)

It is readily recognized that this is a common pattern of behavior which may be observed by every classroom teacher. "Tolerance and understanding is taught by her, for she has been trained to see that children's personality differences are, generally speaking, only as different as the treatment which they get from others. But, this is not answering the immediate need of the speech defective

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 20.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 20.
child. He cannot wait until every other child is trained in patience and understanding. Personality development is a long, continuous, and progressive process. The speech defective must live each day, growing and developing with others.

Through the Departments of Health and Clinical Psychology prescribed treatment may be received for any child within the county but when there is no one in the home community well enough trained to carry out the treatment, the recommendations are useless. Prescriptions for treatment must be suggestive...and to be useful must be interpreted by a teacher who has knowledge of and insight into the problem of speech rehabilitation.¹

To make rehabilitation successful in any schools calls for trained classroom teachers. Even in conditions where clinicians are available the classroom teacher is a vital factor in the success of the program. Speech training cannot be an "extra" added to the curriculum, it must be used to be successful, and that means it must be an integrated part of the daily classwork.

A program involving specialists whose activities are supplemented by classroom teachers, is ideal but it is not feasible for small towns and rural areas. Our public schools must take the measure of meeting the needs of these children and not let financial status of school or residence of parent determine the extent to which the

¹ Backus, Ollie, op. cit., p. 27.
handicapped child receives aid. Because a child with a speech impediment is born in a small town or rural community he must not experience the need of going from one grade through another with no constructive effort made to meet his greatest educational need, that of normal speech.

The program of "speech rehabilitation can be adapted in such a way as to be feasible for every school whether it is rich or poor, large or small".\(^1\) Its success depends upon the training of the classroom teacher.

In small town and rural schools, the leadership for instituting and carrying on speech rehabilitation must fall upon the classroom teacher. She assumes great responsibility but at no time does she consider herself a specialist nor does she attempt to act in that capacity. With training, she can handle a large number of so called minor speech problems. For the more serious, diagnosis and recommendations regarding therapy can still be made through the services of the County Guidance Clinic.

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 26.
Chapter VI

SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper was to point out certain data that would lead to a better understanding of the important place of speech education in our elementary schools and to determine the extent to which our children and teachers of Western Clark County are in need of speech training.

A review of historical literature explains in large measure the prevailing attitude of superintendents, principals, and teachers toward the education of the speech defective in the public schools. Corrective treatment and training has not been considered or recognized as a responsibility of education. Certain fallacies have led educators to regard the failure of the speech defective to succeed as being unavoidable.

A recognition of the great number of children throughout the elementary classrooms who are handicapped to a degree by a speech defect points to the fact that education of the speech defective is not based on a philosophy of pity or charity, but on sound economic and democratic social principles.

Our great needs in dealing with speech handicapped school children is to develop an awareness of their needs, provide adequate training for teachers to meet these needs and build the school program
so that methods and information can be put into use.

It is believed that only by the repeated calling of attention to the problems and the educational possibilities of the speech handicapped child will the attention of those teachers and administrators be brought sufficiently in focus to provide those educational services for which they have control.

The more noted authorities in the field of speech education call attention to the fact that in the absence of therapists the great responsibility of the speech program must be carried by the classroom teacher. Their writings point out that the most substantial thing which can be done for speech handicapped school children is to provide all members of the school staff with at least an elementary knowledge of speech disorders, a practical appreciation of speech correction methods and an understanding of the kinds of schools, classrooms and teachers that are good, or bad for children with speech defects.

Surveys show that little is being done at the present time to provide classroom teachers with the knowledge and techniques for which they are voicing a need. Some teacher training colleges are aware of this short coming and are adding this work to their curriculum through both residence and extension classes.

For children who need it our schools have little to offer that is more important than speech correction. For all children, handicapped or not, there is little we have to give them that can enrich their
lives more fully than clear, effective, pleasant speech. Children
with the ability to talk fluently and clearly, with poise and self-confidence will be the potential leaders of tomorrow.
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APPENDIX

Five speech problems of the fourth grade.

1. A voice difficulty where it seemed the boy had no control of pitch. During the school year this child was referred to a doctor who reported the case to be an extremely unusual one about which no improvement could be made through speech training. The difficulty had prevailed since early childhood.

2. A very serious articulatory defect which was referred to the Health Department for possible organic trouble. That department recommended the child to the University Summer School Speech Clinic.

3. One voice problem with a shy, timid boy who spoke in an almost inaudible monotone because he failed to use adequate lip movement.

4. One case where sounds were omitted.

5. One problem in rhythm. The child spoke with extreme rapidity. It was later learned that he had developed the pattern through imitation of an older member of his family.
Table I

Speech Problems Reported Through Teacher Conversation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>No. enrolled</th>
<th>Total no. speech defective</th>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Rhythm</th>
<th>Articulation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
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</table>
The making of this survey in my own school was first discussed with the principal and superintendent. Each expressed his willingness and interest in having a questionnaire answered by each classroom teacher.

The tabulated results of the number of speech difficulties and the interest of the fourteen elementary teachers in the question of teacher training was encouragement to extend the survey to the nine neighboring elementary schools.

Cooperation was sought through personal interviews with the County Superintendent of Schools, the principal or superintendent of the larger systems and with the teacher in the smaller schools. The questionnaire and the purpose for which it was to be used was discussed and each agreed to participate in the survey.

The purpose was not to make a detailed survey such as would be carried on with speech tests. It was instead a teacher opinion report of those cases in her own classroom which she recognized as not having normally acceptable speech for children of their particular age. The children themselves were in no way made aware of the survey.

It would seem apparent, therefore, that the answers are conservative. The tendency would not be to report a child with normal speech as having a defect while it might be the trend to let the slight impediment go unreported. Primary teachers were reluctant to report infantile speech or that pattern for which they expressed a
thought the child would outgrow.

In the ten schools participating there were forty-nine teachers. Forty-one answered the single page questionnaire.
SPEECH SURVEY BY THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

Name of school_________ Grade___ Total room enrollment___ Date____

There are ___ children in my classroom with speech problems and I would identify them as being: (Please indicate on each line the total number affected)

I Voice
Too loud____ Too soft ____ Monotone ____ No voice ____
Other defects:

II Rhythm
Too rapid ____ Too slow ____ Frequent repetition of sounds
Frequent repetition of words _______ _________

III Articulation
Foreign accent ____ Indistinct ____ Substitutes sounds ____
Omits sounds ______

IV Adjustment problem: (This refers only to those children with speech difficulties)
Has favorable classroom attitude and behavior. Yes ___ No ___
Tense and uncomfortable _______ Sky
Eye blinking _____ Too bold _____ Twitching of mouth ______
of face ______ of body ______
Unsocial attitudes ____ Reluctance to talk _____
Has serious reading problem ____ Has difficulty with spelling ______

V In the space below please give the name, age, and birth date of each child.

VI As a classroom teacher I have had the following courses in speech education:
1.
2.
3.

VII I feel that teachers would ___ would not ___ benefit by having a course during their training period which deals with speech problems in the classroom.

VIII I do___ do not ___ now attempt to give special speech help to my students.

Signed ________________________________
Table II
Distribution of Types of Speech Defect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Reported</th>
<th>Grade Enrollment</th>
<th>Number of Speech Defects</th>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Rhythm</th>
<th>Articulation</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>34</td>
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1. The total number of speech defects will differ from the sum total of voice, rhythm, articulation and others because of multiple defects.

2. Cleft palate was listed in both cases.

Summary of Table:

1. 125 or 9.32 percent of the 1,341 children enrolled in the forty-one classrooms were reported as having prominent speech defects.

2. Approximately 25 percent of the defective cases are reported to be voice problems.
Summary of Table II (cont.)

3. Approximately 36 percent of the defective cases reported are defects of rhythm.

4. Approximately 52 percent of the defective cases reported are articulatory defects.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade taught</th>
<th>Number of Teachers Reporting</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Number Who Have Taken Course</th>
<th>Number Who Have Taken Out Of State</th>
<th>Number Who See Need for Corrective Speech Training</th>
<th>Number Who Do Not See Need to Help Children With Speech Problems</th>
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Table III is continued on page 56.
Table III (Cont.)

Teacher Training and Teacher Opinion of the Need for Speech Training

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<tr>
<th>Grade taught</th>
<th>Number of Teachers Reporting</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Number Who Have Taken Course</th>
<th>Taken Out Of State</th>
<th>Speech Courses Other Than Remedial</th>
<th>Sees Need for Corrective Speech Training</th>
<th>Does Not See Need</th>
<th>Now Helps Children With Speech Problems</th>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4 inc.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Corrective Speech in Lower Grades</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-6 inc.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
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</table>

1. This is pointed out because of the geographical location of the schools in the extreme southwest part of the state. The proximity of the University of Oregon Portland Extension Center has made it possible for teachers to take night classes in the field of speech correction.

2. These classes were recorded as "Principles of Speech, Fundamentals of Speech, Public Speaking, Drama, Radio and Oral Interpretation."

3. From the remarks given, the tendency is to give help in the lower grades through work with phonics.
Summary of Table III

1. Of forty-three teachers reporting, eight reported to have had specific courses in speech correction. Ten listed courses in Principles of Speech or related areas.

2. Four reported to have taken the work at Colleges or Universities out of this state. One listed a college within the state, three did not give location of training.

3. Forty-two teachers expressed recognition of the need for elementary teachers to have training in classroom speech correction.

4. One expressed the opinion that such training is unnecessary.

5. Twenty-eight teachers reported that they do make an effort to give help to children.

6. Fifteen reported that no effort is made to give help in speech correction.