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### Speech in the Curriculum and its Guidance Function

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SPEECH IN THE CURRICULUM AND  
ITS GUIDANCE FUNCTION

SPEECH IN THE CURRICULUM AND ITS  
GUIDANCE FUNCTION

A Thesis  
Presented To  
Dr. Rudolph D. Anfinson  
Eastern Illinois University

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of The Requirements For The Degree  
Master Of Science In Education

Plan B

by  
Evelyn C. Tatge

July, 1958

This is to certify that Mrs. Evelyn Tatge successfully passed her final examination on July 11, 1958.

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## PREFACE

Some 2,000 years ago, Quintilian expressed the feelings of the learned people of his day and culture, when he said that speech training should begin at birth and continue through life. At that time, it was the basis of Roman life encompassing both work and play, and its proficiency, or lack of it, definitely ranked the Roman citizen.

Throughout the ages, varying degrees of importance have been attached to speech according to changing educational trends and needs. During the 19th century, the written rather than the spoken word was emphasized.

Today's swiftly moving world has brought people into closer contact and revived the need for all people to be able to express themselves fluently. As a result, we now find many areas of specialization developing in the speech field. Some of these are: voice science, practical and experimental phonics, speech pathology, linguistics, speech correction, semantics, oratory, oral interpretation, radio, television, psychology of language, and speech pedagogy.

The purpose of this treatise is to show:

1. That the modern school curriculum should be revised to cope with changing times and needs.
2. That speech is the natural and logical starting point of all learning.

3. That speech training is not a thing apart, but a necessary, fundamental training which helps prepare students to meet the social, vocational and civic responsibilities of life.

4. That all teachers, regardless of subject matter, could make their teaching more effective by making use of speech techniques.

5. That speech offers manifold opportunities for guidance and personality improvement.

The author hopes that an appraisal of this work will give the reader a new approach and clearer insight into the problems, opportunities, and merits in giving speech training to everyone in our public schools rather than just the gifted few.

Special appreciation is accorded to Dr. Rudolph D. Anfinson and Dr. Gerhard Matzner of Eastern Illinois University for their valuable criticism of the final draft of this manuscript.

Evelyn C. Tatge

Charleston, Illinois

June 27, 1958

## CHAPTER I

### SPEECH AND TODAY'S CURRICULUM

#### Need For Curriculum Change

Most people are aware that all is not right in the world today, and many are sincerely disturbed. Whenever changes have upset the status quo, it has been the tendency to turn toward our schools for a solution to the problem. The present is no exception.

To most Americans this is exactly as it should be. In some respects their idea of the infallibility of education is as firmly ingrained as their idea of the infallibility of democracy. It is not that they honor the scholar or wish to become one themselves, but from the founding of the colonies, education was considered the means of helping a man rise on the socio-economic scale. In time of need, education, like any good tool, was expected to rise to the use and betterment of mankind. As rapid changes have upset both our social and economic world, the public has relinquished, in fact, foisted more and more responsibility for the full training of children on the public schools.

Working parents and the insecurity brought about by three world wars, plus a myriad of entertainment lures ballyhoed by mass communication, have made it difficult for adult and child alike to evaluate his environment, set standards and formulate proper goals.

The school is asked to prepare children for living in the



environment in which they will live as adults. In the past this has been comparatively easy because society was slow moving, and most people agreed on the fundamental concepts of what was right or wrong, valuable or worthless, proper or improper.

Today we are asked to prepare students to live in a future environment at which we can only guess. Conditions are changing so rapidly that much we teach today will have little application tomorrow, next week, or next year. The bulk of our population, equally frustrated, has dropped the reins and expects the schools to once more bring order out of chaos. No single institution can take the place of the home, church, school and community. We have spread ourselves "too thin" in trying to rise to the need.

Now we realize that the time for reevaluation is long overdue. For what shall the public school be responsible, and how is the best way of meeting that responsibility?

#### Aims of Education

Out of all the confusing beliefs of the various groups and factions, only one major concept seems to remain to which all men cling--the democratic concept of the worth and dignity of men. From this basis we have a starting point for building a curriculum for present day needs.

Harold J. Mahoney<sup>1</sup> lists the specific aims or major objectives of education today as follows:

1. Education is concerned with civic and social duties.
2. Education is concerned with home and family living.

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<sup>1</sup>Harold J. Mahoney, T. L. Engle, Points for Decision (New York: World Book Co., 1956), Chapter II.

3. Education is concerned with mental and physical fitness.
4. Education is concerned with preparation for vocational life.
5. Education is concerned with basic tools of learning.
6. Education is concerned with moral and spiritual values.

These are high sounding aims, but let us stop to realize that before it is possible for men to build anything they must have an effective means of communication. Smith et. al. say:

Discipline in the use of language in every walk of life is an illustration of a language objective that touches the basic need of all people for food and shelter and preservation of life itself.<sup>2</sup>

Before high sounding aims and theory can be made a reality, we must be able to make ourselves understood, make the proposed aims attractive, and win converts and workers to bring about a practical solution of the plans. One has only to toss a common word to most any assembled group to find that many interpretations emerge. Heated arguments arise, friendships are broken and people find themselves with such limited vocabularies that they neither understand fully what they hear nor are able to convey the exact meaning they desire. This situation would be undesirable in any country, but it is unthinkable in a country which claims that it is the duty and obligation for every citizen to perform civic and social duties compatible with his status and importance as a citizen in a democracy.

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<sup>2</sup> B. Othanel Smith, William O. Stanley, J. Harlan Shores, Fundamentals of Curriculum Development (Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Co., 1950) p. 261.

## Speech A Curriculum Newcomer

While speech is the core of today's learning because it is the chief medium of communication, it is a comparative newcomer to the curriculum. The formal reading and writing requirements of the 19th century have changed, but the school has been as slow to realize the new speech need as it has been to weed out the dead wood from the old college preparatory curriculum requirements.

Many small high schools do not offer any speech training except as it may be acquired in the old-fashioned English class. By the time grammar, literature and composition are covered in these classes, speech, listening and critical thinking are forgotten for lack of time. When oral reports are given, the approach is so lacking in motivation and interest that the only one who pays any attention to the talk is the teacher.

Since English is a required subject, most classes are overcrowded. With thirty or forty in a class, most teachers feel there is little opportunity for individual speaking assignments. Furthermore, there is a vast difference in the speech training of English and speech teachers. In a recent survey made in the New York public school system, the English teachers asked that colleges require more speech training in the graduation requirements for a Bachelor's Degree. They said they were being required on many more occasions to speak before the public and help students to do so and felt hesitant and insecure because they had never had the opportunity for sufficient practice.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>"Preparation of English Teachers" The English Journal, (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English) Vol. XLV, March 1956, p. 147.

Many of the larger high schools are adding yearly to the speech offerings, but in the average high school it is offered as an elective open only to juniors and seniors. Why is this true?

First, because speech has been considered by some as an added frill, almost an extra-curricular activity to give students an opportunity to show off in public or give dramatic training to the "stage-struck."

Second, because still others decided that speech was another way of easing through poor students who could not, or would not, do the regular academic English courses.

A third factor has been that many small high schools lack money and facilities. Many have difficulty in maintaining a skeleton staff to teach required subjects. As a consequence when speech is offered, it must be taught by one of the English teachers who has little or no speech training. Unfortunately, in some systems the teacher even has a minimum of English training too, having been hired primarily for ability in some other field and given some English classes as filler.

Fourth and last, but by no means least, has been the lack of people trained in speech. It is a comparative newcomer even to the college campus.

Moreover, a person who expects to be very successful in the speech field should have a good voice, a personality which enables him to lead people, and be "ham" enough to enjoy, understand and adjust to whatever the situation demands. A successful speech teacher finds himself in the place of teacher, actor, advisor, interpreter and confidant to each pupil he has under his tutelage.

But, you say, all teachers should be most of these things. True. But how many are? How many have the personality to draw people to them, maintain discipline, yet win the confidence of their pupils. Most rely on a pseudo-dignity that repulses rather than draws pupils either to the teacher or the subject he teaches. In our culture it has become almost a fetish to not show one's emotions, until we have set up invisible but real barriers toward our fellow man.

Speech teachers can meet this need for student guidance and release even better than a coach since they have both boys and girls, and in their hands lie all the humanities and great literature which serve as the rewarding identification with mankind's present, past and future.

If this type of individual is necessary in speech, why would he not be equally good in all areas of teaching? He would, and the time is dawning when people will realize that a teacher's greatest impact for good is carried out through his personality. When that fact becomes accepted, perhaps our colleges and universities will spend equal time in developing personality and understanding of people along with methods in teaching subject matter.

All teachers need speech training, not just English or speech people. The field is too broad to accomplish everything in one or two years' work. Speech training is fundamental to daily living and should be started in first grade and continued yearly. All students in all classes should develop an awareness of good articulation, enunciation, expression and word choice. More could be done

in critical listening and evaluation and more opportunity given to speak before the class and in public. If this were done from the first grade on, we would not have students, who truly suffer if they have to stand before a group and give a report, or citizens, who fume in silence at public meetings but will not express themselves because of fear of facing the assembled group. We need not sacrifice subject matter to fad or fancy; we only need to let these devices help us teach subject matter better and at the same time help us develop a poised, thinking, happily adjusted citizenry.

## CHAPTER II

### SPEECH A BASIS FOR MULTIPLE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

#### Understanding Audience Empathy

At a recent high school graduation in one of the school systems in the eastern Illinois area, the writer had the opportunity to listen to the valedictorian (girl) and salutatorian (boy) each give a short talk. Anyone listening might, and some of them surely did, wonder why the position of the two young people was not reversed, or even why the valedictorian was there at all.

Both of these young people possessed a high scholastic record, and both were attractive youngsters. As far as family background was concerned everything was in the girl's favor. Her parents were both college graduates and had both social and economic standing in the community. The boy's parents, on the other hand, were separated, and he made his home with his mother and step-father, neither of whom was a high school graduate. The step-father provided the necessities, but the home was very ordinary, and there were no pretensions to anything above average.

As the girl approached the podium that evening, she seemed literally to shrink. Her voice was low, rapid and breathy. Articulation and projection were so poor that few knew at the conclusion of her speech what she had said.

The boy, on the other hand, approached the podium with poise, looked over the audience quietly, smiled, and then began to talk.

He varied his rate of speaking according to the thought and the mood he wished to convey. His enunciation was clear and distinct. His manner throughout the talk was that of enjoyment and appreciation of his good fortune in finding himself in a place of honor and a feeling of sincere appreciation to the community and teachers who had helped make that honor possible. He left the audience relaxed and happy with a feeling of having shared in his accomplishment and satisfaction and pride in their school for a job well done.

Any audience reacts to what they are watching and hearing. Psychologists call this unconscious muscular imitation empathy. It means a feeling in the muscles. It consists of imitating in our own bodies the postures and movements of those we are watching.

Our empathies may be invisible, but they are there. Regular speakers and actors know this. We as teachers need to recognize this and teach pupils to recognize that a successful speaker is one who influences his audience to empathize. When a speaker can sway his listeners to feel as he feels, he is headed toward success.

#### Speech Crosses All Subject Matter Lines

Another reason that speech makes a good core for learning is that it crosses all subject matter lines and uses knowledge from many subjects in one project.

It is not unusual, for example, during the preparatory period of a play to see more people engaged in its progress than just the cast. We find art students designing and painting sets, industrial arts people building sets, home-making students working on costumes or make-up, and physics or shop pupils attacking the lighting and



sound effects problems. And far from forgotten are the business education people who direct their time and talent to the advertising, ticket-making and selling angle.

While all this is going on behind the scenes, the actors may be doing historical research to enable them to faithfully portray the characters of that particular play. They must try to learn how these people looked, felt, thought and played. They must learn to reason, listen and sympathize. This type of study makes a more lasting impression on students than the so-called literary discussion held in conventional classes.

In this type of project each student is working in the field he enjoys and at the same time is learning respect for the other fellow's work. It is not difficult to see that when the problem is attacked in this way the results are better than when the play cast is expected to be jack-of-all trades. Neither is it a case of abstract reasoning without practical application. It gives learning a reason for being.

#### Emotional Readiness in Speech

But why do we so often think of speech as something for a special few and then only at the high school level? Remember when oral reading was considered important and poetry was found in the reading texts of all grade levels? Ann Ess Morrow claims:

When boys and girls are small they tend to be more ready emotionally for the swing and sway of sound than they will ever be. If this psychological readiness is ignored or is not put to worthy use, if children hear but little

poetry...this unfed eagerness finds other outlets, and the joy that lies in poetry is both diminished and delayed.<sup>1</sup>

Today's texts all too often dote on the practical aspects of father going to the office, Zeke the handy man's raking leaves or Baby Sally's visiting school. Imagination is stifled, and sentiment is "corny."

Music is loved by practically all children and can be used as an introduction of poetry or a background for oral readings to help bring out the mood and rhythm of a particular age. The elementary children can use music as they chant and skip around the maypole; the intermediary grades have opportunity to learn folk dances and songs in connection with social studies. The use of costumes can heighten interest, and talks on manners and customs can complete the subject.

There are varying degrees of ability and varying steps to travel as the maturity of the student increases. At the high school level, one might wish to play certain types of music and interpret, either in a written or speech assignment, what the various kinds of music mean to each listener.

All too often teachers with unpleasant voices and with poor reading ability have helped to cause the sorry expression on the faces of children and adolescents at the mention of poetry or choral reading. Grade teachers with no sense of rhythm or an over-powering sense of false dignity are more guilty of this than high school teachers, yet it is in their hands that the raw talent

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<sup>1</sup> Ann Ess Morrow, "The Challenge of Poetry", The English Journal (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English) Vol. XLVI, Jan. 1957, p. 45.

lies. Many times by the time the pupil reaches adolescence, the spark has been extinguished.

#### Basic Fundamentals

There are certain basic fundamentals in perfecting speech. The first of these is a good voice. Parents, who have good voices, use good speech and have good coordination of voice and body, will usually have children who have little difficulty in this respect.

Some people are fortunate in being born with a good voice; some are not. As one authority has so aptly put it:

If we think of the voice as sound produced by a musical instrument we get away from the idea it is something incapable of alteration or improvement. Musical instruments can be tuned and adjusted, so also, our organs of speech may be trained in flexibility and strength. In both cases, the results are more pleasing.<sup>2</sup>

A good voice is an asset socially and a must in most professions. Students need to learn about the speech organs and the breathing technique that makes them operate most effectively. If this training is started early and made continuous, we will not have the high-pitched, squealing female or the loud-braying male. Training that is constant and continuous gets better results and is acquired less painfully.

Along with the proper use of the voice goes the proper use of the body. Speech authorities agree that, "Gestures are normal and essential. They are not something added. In a way they italicize the spoken words making them emphatic and vivid."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Francis Griffith, Catherine Nelson, Edward Stashell, Your Speech (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1955) p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

Illinois Bell Telephone lists the qualities of a good voice as, "vitality, expression, naturalness, pleasantness and intelligibility."<sup>4</sup> These terms are explained in the brief summary that follows.

Without vitality your speech loses its punch and your audience rapidly loses interest. It can be achieved by learning where to put the proper emphasis and by stressing words and phrases which contain the vital portion of your thoughts.

Expression is the quality that conveys the full meaning by using variations of pitch and changing the volume and rate with which you speak.

Naturalness is acquired by using a vocabulary that is familiar to you and speaking with warmth and sincerity. Phony accents or artificiality of any kind can readily be detected and leaves the person open to ridicule if not active dislike.

Pleasantness is the quality that makes people like you and accept you as an agreeable person. Anger and sarcasm can cut deeper than you intend.

Intelligibility means that every word and syllable is understood. If you have good enunciation and articulation, the listener can understand what is being said and is then free to concentrate fully on the message you wish to convey.

There is no substitute for courtesy. It is only being courteous to observe good speech habits so that people are not embarrassed by not being able to understand what you have said.

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<sup>4</sup>Anon. Your Voice is You (Evanston, Illinois: Illinois Bell Telephone Company).

People who consider themselves quite mannerly sometimes mumble in speaking or race along at such a clip that people have to ask them to repeat what they have said or else guess what meaning they are trying to convey. Is it not our duty as teachers to see that this habit is broken in our classrooms whatever subject matter we may be teaching?

Colloquialisms, mispronunciations, or any speech peculiarities that may cause the pupil trouble if he moves from his particular locality to another, should be brought to his attention and cleared up if possible. In the mobile population of today, the odds are great that most of our pupils will move several times during their lifetimes. Is it not our duty to make those moves as painless speech-wise as possible?

#### Speech A Need Of All

Many students and grownups alike think speech training is something for only the gifted few or for those who need it for vocational training.

Let us consider for a moment some of the everyday activities that are universal to all of our people. Everyone has occasion to give directions clearly, make appointments, relay messages, talk on the telephone, serve as host and apply general rules of etiquette. True these things are touched upon in English classes, but seldom are they tied in with activities in real life that make them meaningful and natural for the student.

Speech students, perhaps more than students from other departments, appear more often before the public. A student who

expects to use what he is taught will feel it is important to remember what he is taught. For the same reason students who meet the public gain poise and ease as conversationalists. Grammar and vocabulary are learned not just as a class exercise but because they are needed.

Proper stance and good eye contact should be stressed daily in all classes. Distracting mannerisms should be noted and help offered by all members of the class in correcting these defects.

In most such classes students become better listeners because they are called upon to take notes daily and give corrections and suggestions at the conclusion of each speech. This practice soon makes for a close-knit group that works together compatibly and welcomes the suggestions of all within the group rather than relying on the chosen few.

#### Speech For The Gifted

For the more advanced student we have many activities which can help him improve his abilities. There are always class plays and usually a series of one-acts given by the speech department during the winter season. Usually it is one of these that emerges as the school's entry in the spring Dramatic Festival. Here the student has an opportunity to see the best acting talent in the state. He has a chance to help his school try and win the state plaque and to win individual glory by winning a place on the all-state play cast.

There are also nine individual speech events in which he may compete, advancing through district and sectional competition to the state according to his ability. Often scholarships are earned in

this manner, and many times contests have been the motivating factor in getting students to take speech in college.

There are few schools that wish radio time that cannot get a weekly spot if they ask for it. This is a medium of communication that should be used by all grades. The cost of a tape recorder is small and will serve those centers too far from a radio station to produce a live program. The class work done with tape is invaluable. It is one of the best teaching aids because a student can actually hear his own mistakes.

Creative writing of skits, monologues and orations are useful devices for talented youngsters to use before local social and civic organizations or at contest. It is not at all unusual for former high school students who return home from college to express their thanks to the teacher who gave them work in creative writing.

Debating teams, round-table discussion groups, mock trials, all sharpen a student's listening, reasoning and speaking power. These devices can also be used in practically any subject matter area.

#### Speech in Vocations

For several years high schools have been broadening their vocational offerings. Students are taught how to dress, act, and speak in applying for a job. In some instances business men can be obtained to talk to the group and explain the things employers consider important and how prospective employees may make a favorable impression. Afterwards these men listen in on students who are practicing such interviews and may even take part in them. These contacts in some cases eventually lead to jobs for various students.

Another important result is that this active participation on the part of the business men makes a better relationship between the community and the school. Often it serves as a means of securing active support for school needs.

#### Speech And Democracy

One of the first steps we should take in teaching democratic behavior is to instill the importance of each student's being a good citizen in his own classroom.

In the elementary school we teach the 3 R's. These are the tools of learning, and the pupils depend on their teachers for instruction. As they become more proficient in these skills, they are encouraged to become more self-reliant.

In a large measure they direct their own education. Teachers should act as guides to help students over difficult spots, show them short cuts in the work, and enrich their appreciation; but when pupils grasp the fundamentals, they should learn to understand the purpose of classroom speaking.

Every period is an opportunity for students to learn from one another. By exchanging experiences and thinking together, they reach a clearer comprehension of ideas as well as a mastery of important information and an ability to use it in everyday living.

Whenever pupils recite, they are teaching others. They are communicating their thoughts and feelings so that other members of the group may understand and feel as they do. When they realize this, they will realize they have an obligation to take an active part in all class discussions.



Students should be made to feel that they are talking and contributing to their group not just to the teacher. Active participation gives students satisfaction, and also enables the teacher to spot weaknesses and give the remedial work needed. When students take the responsibility of contributing, they will also feel the need to make that contribution as clear and interesting as possible.

As the students mature and progress through the school system, student government gives another opportunity to study the democratic processes. History courses, debates, and round-table discussions provide ample opportunity for speech practice. Students see the democratic way of arbitration and compromise, but here is also an opportunity to make them aware of the bad devices that demagogues and unscrupulous leaders can, and often do, use to wrongly influence people. A speaker may appeal to our feelings rather than our reason. If we can recognize false arguments, we will not be misled by rabble-rousing speeches, dramatic lighting, flags, bands, songs and mud-slinging slogans.

There are times and occasions when emotion can be used for a good purpose. "What is dangerous is the use of emotional appeal to create false impressions, distort truth, hide facts or incite listeners to act unthinkingly."<sup>5</sup>

When people form the habit of reaching their own conclusions, they are well on the way to becoming educated citizens, the kind of men and women needed if our democracy is to survive. All too many

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<sup>5</sup>Francis Griffith, Catherine Nelson, Edward Stasheff, Your Speech (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1955) p. 202.

times this knowledge is omitted. We are so busy teaching the facts of a subject that we do not stop to think whether our students have been trained to sift those facts and decide for themselves and their generation what is good and what is bad. Formerly the inability of a people to be discerning was regrettable; today it may be fatal!

## CHAPTER III

### SPEECH AN ADJUNCT OF GUIDANCE

#### Mass Communication And Its Effect On Leisure Time

We are hearing more about the necessity for guidance in our schools, but the time will never come when guidance can be completely divorced from the classroom and made into a separate department. True, guidance people can aid classroom teachers, but they cannot replace them. There are not enough people trained in guidance, nor do they have students at long intervals of time as the regular classroom teacher does. Fortunately speech teachers are in one of the best positions in school to do guidance since they deal with the mother tongue and those things basic to our culture. Furthermore, they meet students in an informal atmosphere where they have the opportunity to observe and learn how students really feel and think. In turn it is easier for them to gain acceptance and win the confidence of the group.

Today, with modern technological know-how, working hours are constantly being shortened giving people more leisure time. In the past this was not a problem since there was less leisure and fewer things were vying for peoples' time and attention.

Easy mass communication has changed all that. Easy access to television, comic books, magazines, radio and movies is open to all. The line of least resistance is merely to allow one's self to be

bombarded by whatever comes along. What one sees is not determined by the artists who perform nor by a public welfare board but by industrialized, commercial business men. There is no protection to date except as each individual is trained to evaluate the worth of what he sees.

William D. Boutwell expresses our problem as follows in a letter to a friend of his:

You know the language of the Preamble to UNESCO'-.... since wars begin in the minds of men....' Not only wars but practically everything. That's your business, Abe, the minds of men and women. That's the business of mass media, too; the minds of men, influencing their minds. Business is spending at least \$12 billion annually to do just that. Mass media captures four to five hours of the average adult's waking day. If education is a process of preparing young people to do what they are likely to do anyway, isn't it the duty of the schools to teach the coming generation how to be masters, not slaves of mass media? How to select what is best? How to know the tripe from the true?<sup>1</sup>

First we must start our project by realizing that mass communication is so big that we can never collect all the material to be studied into one neat package where we can preview it and decide what we will say about each type. There are no textbooks or outlines of study. Experimentation seems the only alternative. However, there is much that we already know and teach that also applies to mass communication.

Both the speech teacher and the English teacher have been taught about plot structure in fiction and drama, so each can apply that knowledge to plot structure in movies and TV. Characterization need not be considered only in studying classics; it applies equally to the

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<sup>1</sup>William D. Boutwell, "Education for the Age of Communication", The English Journal (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English) Vol. XLVII, March 1958, p. 139.

comic book characters or the western movie.

In literature we introduce our students to the basic principles of plot structure. We show how it is organized, study the conflict, its development, its climax, its denouement. We know the ground work of fiction, and most mass communication is based on fiction. It is not too much to assume, therefore, that we can teach our students to bring these same principles to bear in judging the relative merits of actors or current examples of mass media fiction like Oh, Susanna or Have Gun, Will Travel.

Boutwell offers yet another technique when he asks:

Why not ask students to read critics' reviews of film, TV, etc., which they find in Time, Scholastic, and the local newspapers? Then ask them to compare these estimates with their own. A new generation of sharp critics could do more to lift the quality of mass media than anything else. No art is ever any better than its audience.<sup>2</sup>

Now let us dwell for a moment on the case study of mass communications. There are many pertinent avenues to consider. Here are some suggestions:

1. Have students make a survey of the comic books that are read in their neighborhood or school.
2. Decide what changes are often made when a book is made into a movie. Why were these changes considered necessary? How did it change the meaning of the book or the feeling toward certain characters?
3. What improvement has pay-television to offer?
4. Discuss the upheaval TV has caused in the advertising world and the loss of revenue to magazines and newspapers.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 142.

5. Have students decide whether local police should have the power to stop the sale of leud literature in their locale.

These problems could be studied by student panels. Results could be printed in the school newspaper and a classroom or school bulletin board could be utilized to interest the whole school not just the study group. Group viewing of certain programs with subsequent discussions could help in getting group action and opinion.

Clarence Hach of Evanston, Illinois advises: "...we, with the aid of literature, must help our young people learn that the basest of all things is to be afraid."<sup>3</sup>

He suggests the use of literature of all kinds to show the realities and truths concerning love and honor, pity and pride, and compassion and sacrifice. Only as people are taught to understand the frailities and strengths of the human race can they cope with the problems that beset it. Only a people who can control themselves can hope to understand and lead others whether it entails acting as leader of a small group or being the guiding force in world leadership.

That this same media of mass communication can be used as a motivating influence for learning has been experienced by the Springfield, Illinois school system. There a half hour telecast is given each week to acquaint the public with what goes on in their public schools. The program also gives pupils at both the grade and high school level worthwhile experiences in speech, drama, music, art, reading, social studies and many other subjects.

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<sup>3</sup>Hardy R. Finch, "NCTE Bulletin Board", The English Journal (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English) Vol. XLVII, March 1958, p. 164.

School news is gathered, edited, and read by students in each one of the schools in the unit. This is a great motivating factor for students to improve in writing and oral reading too. News articles are illustrated by various exhibits, demonstrations, and other photogenic matter. Not all schools can have a weekly telecast, but almost any school could do much the same thing with a good radio program.<sup>4</sup>

#### Humor A Means To Moral Health And Social Reform

Yes, television and radio both do a good job of showing us life as it is today and giving us a multitude of facts. For entertainment, you say, we still have the tragedian and the comedian. However, since the beginning of the 20th century, world affairs have caused man so much suffering and tragedy that realism and drama seem the only way to portray life. Insecurity in a rapidly changing world has made the old, genteel way of living obsolete. A hard, consuming greed and materialism has grown in its stead. Comedy, when we see it, is slap-stick aimed at making us forget, an antidote to lure us temporarily into forgetfulness.

Sophistication seems the outward counterment, but actually man is more emotionally involved than at any time in history. Consequently everyone has a "sacred cow" which must be respected. Gone is the comedy that caused thoughtful laughter over needed social reforms or silly self-deception with which we all dose ourselves. The humor of Mark Twain's day cut through what men pretended to be and showed what they really are.

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<sup>4</sup>Robert C. Glazier, "Television Classroom", NEA Journal (Washington, D. C.: Journal of the N.E.A.) Vol. XLVII, No. 5, May 1958, pp. 290-291.

Edward G. Gordon explains:

The comic is not merely laughable, but one of the richest ways for man to find his own nature. The students we teach are constantly playing roles, and if the role-playing is unsuccessful, they fall back on self-pity and on psychological explanations of what has gone wrong. A study of the comic might help them see themselves as part of a larger social view, opposed to their self-centered view. So then, the student might be nearer to that great aim of education, "Know thyself".<sup>5</sup>

Ernest Cassirer tried to show the worth of comedy when he wrote:

Comic art possesses in the highest degree that faculty shared by all art, sympathetic vision. By virtue of this faculty it can accept human life with its defects and foibles, its follies and vices. Great comic art has always been...a praise of folly. In comic perspective all things begin to take on a new face..... we become observant of the minutest details; we see this world in all its narrowness, its pettiness and silliness. We live in this restricted world, but we are no longer imprisoned by it. Such is the peculiar character of comic catharsis. Things and events begin to lose their material weight; scorn is dissolved into laughter and laughter is liberation.<sup>6</sup>

And so humor has a triple value for all people today. It can point the way to social reform, aid in self-knowledge and evaluation, and give us an optimistic view which sees life as it is but refuses to go down in defeat. If we can lead our students to understand these things, then we have given them the power to know life and meet it unafraid, wresting from it the good and remaining undefeated by the bad.

What generation has needed guidance in this direction more than

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<sup>5</sup>Edward J. Gordon, "What Happened To Humor?", The English Journal (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English) Vol. XLVII, March 1958, pp. 128-129.

<sup>6</sup>Anon., An Essay On Man (Doubleday Anchor Book, 1953) p. 192.



ours? The literature and drama teacher must help her students not to contradict man's weaknesses and defeat, but rather to transcend it. All generations have been plagued with doubt and defeat, but our religion, our literature and our culture have proved that where man has lived up to his potential, order can be restored and progress made. This we as teachers must believe, and this we must teach.

#### Speech An Aid To Emotional Adjustment

These are high aims and all things that are needed to give a student an understanding of people and life in the world in which he must live. But all too often we ask him to have patience with, respect for, and love of others, when he feels that in all his small world no one cares one whit what becomes of him individually.

People who are comfortable, secure and happy have little difficulty in being congenial and tolerant of their fellows. But how about the child who has had no success or approval for so long he can not remember anything but disapproval? Most youngsters start school filled with curiosity and enthusiasm for all that is new. They are anxious to please and are happy when their contribution of rocks, a butterfly, or some tadpoles is considered important. They aren't worried yet by IQ's and not too much concerned about which side of the tracks their home is located. They are accepted by their peers and their teachers, and life is a happy experience.

What causes the change from a cheerful, interested, busy beginner to the sullen, bold, studied impertinence of the teen-age hood resplendent in black jacket and engineer boots? Often, of course, the

child's lack of native ability to learn is an obstacle which either prohibits or retards his contributions to the group in which he desires acceptance. The world is filled with such people who, in spite of the good intentions of both teachers and parents, have not been helped to perform up to their capacity simply because, in spite of all the literature written and college courses taken, we still do not actually know how to do the things we say should be done.

But the writer does not feel that our lost sheep in the engineer boots usually comes from the low ability group. Too often at the high school level, we find that he could be an average or above average achiever if he would apply himself. He has become anti-social because he feels as if he is a lone wolf, and nobody understands him and nobody cares. Being one in a classroom of thirty or forty others does not give a teacher much opportunity to get to know any of these students well. Again he is only one of the herd. Assignments, often meaningless to him, are made, and if he fails to conform the resultant "E" feeds his resentment, and his rebellious attitude only adds to the reputation he has made of being uncooperative and a trouble-maker.

Often the student is worried about his physical appearance, not being accepted by his peers, home problems, lack of finances, conflict with parents, racial or ethnic groups, contradictions in social behavior in different groups and lack of confidence in himself to cope with his problem.

Tryon has this to say:

The peer group, whether it is a neighborhood play group, a social clique, or a delinquent gang, offers the child or adolescent greater continuity in terms of time, and more understanding than he finds in adult-directed groups... Next to the family in childhood and probably equally with

the family during adolescence, the peer group provides satisfactions to the basic urges for security in the warmth of friendship and the sense of adequacy that comes from belonging....<sup>7</sup>

This was vividly brought to the writer's attention on the last day of school one year when one of her students, a graduating senior, ambled into her room as she was sorting the materials in her desk drawers preparatory to summer vacation. He smiled rather shyly and remarked as an opener:

Do you know Mrs. T that you were the one that spoiled my report card? Yours is the only "C" I got this nine weeks. But it's my own fault. I just didn't spend enough time on speech. Gee, I bet you're surprised to hear me say that aren't you?

She commented that it was a change in attitude from the year before when he had been in her American Literature class to which he replied:

Yes, I guess I have changed a lot. I know now I have the brains to get my work, but before I met Judy this year, it didn't seem to matter to me what I did. You don't understand; everything I do I must do on my own. My old man is okay, but honest Mrs. T my folks are both so ignorant they don't know what I'm talking about when I try and tell them things I'd like to do. They both work, and I can't remember when they were both home at the same time, or when we ever did anything together. You know, I'm not madly in love with Judy, but since we've been going steady she's pounded some sense into me, and things seem to matter somehow. It's gonna be tough, but I think now I can make it. I'd like to be an engineer some day if I can work my way through. You know, I feel sorry for Larry and Kerry. They're bitter just like I was. There are only two of us boys, Bill and me, that ever were able to crash into the group that runs things--you know, the gang that's important. Well, guess I better get going. Maybe I'll stop in and see you when I come back sometime.

She waved him on with a smile of encouragement while she longed to say, "Don't worry about Larry. He found an anchor for his faith

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<sup>7</sup>Carolyn M. Tryon, "The Adolescent Peer Culture", Adolescence 43RD Yearbook Of The National Society For The Study Of Education (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1944) p. 236.

two weeks ago. I think he'll make it now too."

How few we really reach, and how humble it makes one feel when we do. As the writer looks back over her years of teaching she is more convinced than ever that emotional problems are the root of most of our troubles. Speech teachers are in the best position in the whole school system to reach children and their sore spots. In the first place the class has fewer pupils per class and an informal atmosphere allowing the students to work together more closely and letting students and teachers learn to know each other. The outside activities give the student a feeling of pride in his accomplishments and often open the way for a better parent-child relationship. They strike through the social barriers and allow a boy or girl to learn to know and be accepted by those classmates having a higher socio-economic background. Many times speech classes and activities have brought the recognition needed to convince a student he could climb above his present environment and pull himself up by his own bootstraps.

In retrospect, the writer can see a little orphan girl who was adopted by a low-income farm family. When Sandy entered high school no one paid any attention to her. During her freshman and sophomore years the days were a daily grind of classes and work with limited companionship and fun. In her junior year, the writer had her in study hall and began to suspect that her quiet, drab exterior covered real dramatic talent.

She interested Sandy in speech contest, and, much to her surprise, Sandy did better than the writer had supposed possible. The girl worked unceasingly to win and, although all her work had to be done after school since she was not enrolled in speech class, she came

through the preliminary contest and won the right to represent the school in the district although several of the other contestants had had more speech training. Sandy went to the state her first year. After that she appeared in several plays, and was provided with the opportunity to speak before various clubs and civic groups.

Her confidence soared along with her popularity, and she decided after graduation to go to college. She did, and today is an accomplished speech instructor who is trying to give understanding and help to others like herself.

Then there is Dan. The product of a broken home, he had little to encourage him or much to live up to. Both parents had remarried, and Dan lived a short time with his father and step-mother. He was unwanted by the latter, and when his father's health failed, it seemed an excellent excuse for easing Dan out of their home. The court would not allow Dan's mother custody because of the questionable morals and behavior of both her and her second husband. Finally Dan was taken in by his maternal grandmother but received a dubious acceptance from the community because of his family background.

Speech class gave Dan the opportunity to gain recognition with his peers. Then he discovered two high school teachers that were, for him, the symbol of what people should be. Their interest and guidance helped blot out the unfortunate impressions made by his father and mother.

Dan went to the state contest two years in succession and placed in the finals. Aided by a local church group, he went on to college and majored in radio and communications. While working during summer vacation at a summer resort, he met a student nurse who helped him gain acceptance with the kind of people and the way of life to which he

aspired. Today he is a good citizen and holding down a responsible job.

Dale was one of those poor youngsters whose speech defect was so bad that people could not understand him when he entered first grade at Gary, Indiana. Fortunately, the Gary system had a speech correctionist. By the time Dale reached high school, he could speak clearly although there was a certain thickness to his voice. He enrolled in a regular speech class and appeared in several plays and other events. Today he is a speech correctionist himself and very grateful to the people who helped him overcome his handicap and lead a fuller life.

But speech helps many people in many ways. All who take it do not become speech instructors or make a living in something related to the speech field.

Ted had had trouble ever since he was in grade school. His IQ was exceptionally high, but the accidental shooting of a small playmate had caused people to look askance at everything he did. Gradually, the more criticism and ostricism he received the more he decided he had a reputation to uphold. He distrusted everyone and frequented the local tavern as many hours as possible after school to keep from having to go home where the "old man" would give him a lecture on the error of his ways and bemoan the fate that had sent him such a son.

Frequently Ted thought of running away but decided against it because of his mother. Finally he reached his senior year barely making passing grades. He bragged that most students were squares, and everybody had an angle. When try-outs were announced for the senior

play, Ted announced that he would try out, but of course he wouldn't get a part against all those students who were good little boys and "polished the apple."

The drama coach, knowing the situation, took her courage in both hands and gave him a part. She explained to him privately that he had the qualifications for the part but that he would have to work at it to do the part well. She added that she was banking on his doing a good job. Ironically enough the part he was to play was that of a southern gentleman. He promised to do his best.

His ducktail haircut was exchanged for a more conventional one, while his tongue and body tried to pick up the proper speech and graceful movement expected of a gentleman. Sometimes it seemed an utter impossibility that he would succeed. The rest of the cast looked on dubiously, but the director was popular enough that they went along with the idea. Gradually, with painstaking persistence and constant supervision, the play began to take shape. Then came curtain time of the fatal night. Ted wasn't the prize delinquent but just a scared kid.

No, Ted wasn't the star performer, but he gave a creditable performance that drew comments of approval from his peers and the audience. It took courage to face the people who knew his reputation and play that kind of part. As for papa and mama, they sat and beamed proudly through the whole performance, and parents and son got reacquainted afterwards.

This play was the only worthwhile thing Ted had done in four years of high school. After the last performance, a cast party was given in one of the most highly respected homes in the community, and Ted appeared scrubbed and polished with his new manners very much in

evidence. That night he resolved after graduation to start anew in a different environment and try and prove he could belong with the right kind of people.

But there are many more, and each year the list grows longer. And each year the writer is more firmly convinced that once someone reaches the sore spot much of the trouble is solved. Speech teachers have a wonderful opportunity to serve as listening posts, establish rapport, gain an insight into student needs and reactions, offer opportunities for the individual to gain recognition and success and use factual material from many fields to give the student a gradually expanding insight and appreciation of both his strengths and weaknesses and the world about him. As speech develops so does the entire education of the individual.

A speech teacher's responsibility is great and the hours are long, but the satisfaction he feels in helping students unravel the tangled skeins of their lives and turn to productivity leaves a trail of warm, happy memories unknown to his more dignified, introspective colleagues.



## CHAPTER IV

### IMPLEMENTATION OF NEEDED CHANGE

#### Problems Posed By The Public's Demand For The Education Of All

We all know that education is being criticized as never before, that the public is demanding that all people be trained. We can not train all people unless we can keep them in school, and that can be accomplished only by holding their interest. Let us start with first things first and try to master this important phase of the problem. Certainly when subject matter is presented in a dramatized form it holds interest and is easier to retain, and speech techniques have both variety and holding power. Secondly, we must make people realize that we can not count anyone educated who can not speak and write his own language, even though he may be proficient in mathematics and science.

All this proves that more attention should be given throughout the entire public school system to speaking, listening, critical thinking and guidance. Many students will not have the benefit of a college education, so we must teach them poise, emotional responsiveness, gestures, vocal variety, vocabulary and organization of material on the lower level. Even those who do go on to higher learning could advance more rapidly, if they had been exposed to these things in the grades and high school.

These things are not out of reach if we decide as a profession that they are necessary and attack them vigorously on all fronts. That means that every teacher regardless of subject matter or grade must emphasize them. Only through concerted effort can the job be accomplished.

#### The Administration And In-Service Training

Change always poses problems and there will, no doubt, have to be in-service training and experimentation by both teachers and administrators. The first step, of course, is to gain the support of the administrators. Without their support any plan is doomed to failure.

Administrators, like teachers, usually move slowly in instituting change. Few of them have first hand training and experience in the speech field, and many fear moving away from the status quo. However, the good administrator, like the good teacher, will be constantly alert for new approaches that will increase the effectiveness of the educational system.

An alert, progressive administrator who encourages his teachers to experiment and creates a permissive attitude enabling teachers to feel their ideas are appreciated has taken the first step. Teachers will move out into new ways if they feel that failure will not condemn them to disapproval and perhaps dismissal.

Once the administrator has taken the initiative or empowered someone else to do so, a workshop could be started to help teachers understand the way speech meets the basic educational need and how its techniques could be used effectively in their own departments.

Some would undoubtedly feel a need for more speech training themselves, and most definitely guidance and personality problems would create a challenging study.

#### Assistance From Colleges And Universities

College and university personnel can usually be found who would willingly serve as resource persons during the workshop sessions. Extension courses and summer school courses are additional helps. Many schools have found help through visiting other school systems and having teachers report their findings back to the home group.

Colleges could help out materially too by weeding out the less desirable teacher trainees and stressing the importance of personality development in handling and understanding people. Unfortunately at this time, many college professors are no more cognizant of this need than grade and high school teachers. They, too, have been too busy teaching subject matter to worry about how it is expressed or how it is received. All teachers at all levels must learn to meet student needs.

#### Equipment And Expense

Tape recorders should be provided for all grade levels. It is possible to teach faster and get better results when students can hear their own mistakes. Some money might be needed for projects and for transportation to local places where students are asked to speak. The extra money involved would be negligible, and the benefit in public relations would be great.

The public is prone to support those things they consider worthwhile, and few parents can be found that do not consider any

program important that teachers Junior and at the same time gives him a chance to "show off."

#### Concerted Effort Needed For Success

Someone once said, "Language most showeth a man; speak that I may see him." Speech reflects a man's social environment and is a direct tool in his adjustment to each new experience and stimulus. So let us make a concerted effort to win respect for our mother tongue and make its proper use rewarding. Only through its use can we express those thoughts and ideas which will carry us forward to further progress. How fast that progress takes place through better communication depends on us.

Communication is as old as the human race and as new as tomorrow. A curriculum must use the good from many methods, but it can grow and function only through speech.

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