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ABSTRACT

Two programs have been developed in Pennsylvania to provide opportunities for and guidance in the development of speech communication curricula. The State Consultancy Service, established in 1964, first used volunteer consultant authorities to initiate speech education programs in school curricula or to suggest methods for improving existing programs. At no time has there been an attempt to establish a state prescribed syllabus or curriculum, although the program has operated under the supervision of the state's Department of Public Instruction. The second program developed from a Title III grant funded in 1968 with the objective of developing speech education programs that are adaptable to a variety of school situations, depending on population, schedules, and educational philosophies. The curricula are formulated in terms of behavioral objectives and thus can be used in programs ranging from mini-courses to two-semester courses. One result of these programs is that the Pennsylvania Department of Education now employs a full-time speech advisor. (RN)

IMPROVING THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SPEECH CURRICULUM

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"Through a State-Wide Educational Consultancy Service"

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The Consultancy Service in Speech Education that was established in Pennsylvania has been reported on in previous SCA convention programs and in articles in the professional journals. (For example, The Speech Teacher, 1968, and the Pennsylvania Speech Annual, 1964 & 1965.) However, in order to explain how the Consultant program worked in developing curriculum in the high schools, I would like to review what the Consultant program was, how it was organized, and what its purpose was, before speaking to the topic of developing curriculum in the high schools through a State-wide Consultancy Service.

The initiative for the consultant program came from the Pennsylvania Speech Association (now SCAP). As William Tacey stated in the PSA Annual (1964), "Almost from its beginning in 1939, PSA has been sending officers and committees to confer with Department of Public Instruction officials in Harrisburg. Tactics have varied from year to year but the strategy remains constant: Let's have more speech taught by competent teachers in the Commonwealth's public schools." In the 1950's a concentrated effort to gain recognition, cooperation, and support from the DPI was begun. There were partial victories but little action. In 1962 and 1964 efforts were increased and many conferences between DPI and PSA were held. In March 1964, policies and procedures were agreed upon - two of these were (1) DPI would appoint 15 PSA members as unpaid consultants to advise school officials on course planning, etc., and (2) DPI would appoint a paid part-time speech specialist as soon as budget permitted. The Consultants were appointed in August, 1964, but "budget limitations" did not permit the appointment of the part-time speech specialist to the Department until January, 1967.

Additional Consultants were appointed as needed - by 1967, 23 were approved by the DPI and PSA and appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The role of the Consultants was vague - for the system was new - but, essentially it was to promote speech education throughout the State. There was no prescribed format for the Consultants to follow; each developed his own system and methods as suggested by the needs of the students and the schools in his area. The Consultants only guidelines were to explore and to expand means by which speech education would be made available in each school district

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of the State. The Consultants worked within the framework of the particular school: the goal was to expand and to enrich existing speech offerings or to initiate speech education in the curriculum.

At no time in the planning and working of the consultancy system was the objective to formulate a speech requirement for all schools or to develop a state prescribed speech curriculum or syllabus.

The Department of Public Instruction provided materials as needed for the Consultants. The two most significant were (1) a suggested syllabus for high school for a one or two semester course, and (2) a policy statement representing the official position of the DPI relative to speech education, K-12. This statement contained a definition and explanation of speech education, a list of assumptions, principles, objectives, activities, and criteria for speech education. This document provided the model for the individual teacher or school in order to develop its own curriculum based on the needs of the particular school population. The Consultant was available to give advice and direction for the implementation of the stated objectives in the PSA-DPI document. In this manner the Consultant served as a resource person to aid the teacher in translating the policy statement into actual curriculum.

Each Consultant was free to work in the manner and method as best suited the specific needs of the schools in the area. Basically, the manner in which the State-wide Consultancy system worked to develop speech communication curricula in the schools was either by invitation or initiative. First, let me note that the Consultants had an entry into the schools since they were appointed by the Department of Education - the mention of the PDE provided at least a hearing by the chief school administrator. If the approach to a school was by the Consultant's initiative, the Consultant had to first meet with the school administrator and with him assess the position of speech education in the school. If speech was all ready a part of the curriculum offerings in the school, the Consultant next met with the speech teachers to help them review, evaluate, and strengthen the existing programs and to determine the areas in which the Consultant could be of service. If the school was offering nothing in speech education, the Consultant's task was to show the administrator ways in which oral activities in English and Social Studies classes, for example, could be directed to meet not only the specific goals of that class but also could provide instruction in communication. Through adequate utilization of school personnel and in-service training, a beginning program in speech education could be provided in most every school.

In the Buys, Carlson, Compton, and Frank statement prepared for SCA's Committee on Curriculum for the High School (Speech teacher, XVII:4, 1968), the section dealing with the Administrator states, "the administrator should become familiar with the suggested program and the implications involved in undertaking such a program." While this is quite true, we found in the work of the Consultants with the administrators, this step was far down the line in the process of developing curriculum for a school. More frequently the administrators gave lip-service to the need for speech in the curriculum but sought escape with the protection of budget, scheduling, and personnel. Therefore, the Consultant had to adapt his goal to the immediate needs of the school, and rather than being able to introduce speech education as an addition to the curriculum offerings, the Consultant had to work within the system and offer workshops, in-service sessions, and demonstration classes to help the classroom teacher make more meaningful those oral activities he was all ready using. From this beginning, the Consultant could work with the teachers and administrators to develop a speech curriculum. At all phases of the Consultants contacts with the schools, he had to be willing to provide guidance and help to the teachers in the school system at that time. One of the outcomes of this approach was the large number of in-service sessions provided by the Consultants. These in-service sessions brought about changes in curriculum, such as added offerings in speech and revisions of goals of existing courses.

Through a combination of circumstances, the Pennsylvania Consultants System was able to expand its service in developing curriculum. Since the State had identified a body of professionals willing to work in curriculum development, it was logical to utilize this group in applying for a Title III-ESEA grant. We feel that the fact that the State Speech Association and the Department of Education had organized the Consultant System was a contributing factor in the funding of the Title III proposal.

The objectives of the Title III project were to establish working relationships between school administrators and speech consultants to develop speech education programs. Ten schools were selected as the primary participants in the project - the schools represented were diversified in size, socio-economic status, existing speech education curriculum, geographic areas of the State, and public, private, and parochial schools. The purposes of this project were (1) to develop course outlines and materials using a behavioral objectives approach, (2) to test the course outlines in the selected schools, and (3) to disseminate

the results through in-service programs.

Through the combined efforts of the Title III project and the State-wide Consultancy service, speech curricula were developed for the schools of Pennsylvania. These curricula were designed so that they were adaptable to a variety of school situations - population, schedules, and philosophies. Since the curricula were formulated in behavioral terms - assumptions, activities, and evaluative criteria - they could be used in programs that range from mini-courses to two semester courses.

The Pennsylvania Consultant System has enjoyed both success and failures. Successes are in (1) providing sample and model curricula as developed by the Consultants in individual work with schools and in the Title III project; (2) making resource persons available to every school district in the State; and (3) in finally moving from voluntary consultants to part-time speech advisor in the Pennsylvania Department of Education, to full-time speech advisor in PDE. Failures are (1) the voluntary consultant system no longer exists under the endorsement of the PDE; (2) there are still many schools with little or no speech education or that which does exist needs to be improved and expanded. Hopefully, this approach in developing curricula through the State-wide Consultancy service can now be continued through the position of the Communications Advisor in the Bureau of Curriculum Services in the Pennsylvania Department of Education.