

AMERICANS OF TOMORROW

December 6, 1934

Description: The Use of New Inventions in Education, or "Mechanical Aids in Education"

Participants: Harry Von Zell, Eleanor Roosevelt

Inventions in Education¹

MUSICAL THEME – FADE

ORCHESTRA

MR. VON ZELL

The American Typewriter Industry has the honor of presenting Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt in another of her talks on "Americans of Tomorrow." The sponsors of this series have news this evening. Six talks on child education by Mrs. Roosevelt, including those recently broadcast and also next Sunday's talk, together with new material, have been printed and bound in a 32-page edition under the title, "Helping Your Child to Success." This gift edition will be offered after Mrs. Roosevelt's talk through the courtesy of the makers of Corona, Remington, Royal, and Underwood portable typewriters.

MUSIC UP AND FINISH

MR. VON ZELL

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt -- speaking to you from Washington, D.C.

MRS. ROOSEVELT

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. This evening we shall devote a little time to a subject which for many years has been debated by educators.

In the old days education meant teaching the three "r's" and then gradually more and more subjects were added but they were for the most part, subjects which had to do with books and intellectual knowledge. For a number of years now, a new conception of methods of education has been growing. First of all, it began to dawn on us that sometimes children could be taught certain things through the use of their hands when it was very hard for them to learn things out of books. A boy who simply could not master arithmetic could be allowed to build a playhouse and in the measuring up of lumber and floor space, would find the intricacies of arithmetic become simple and easy to understand.

Manual training of any kind, the development of art and crafts, new ways of teaching rhythm and music, led gradually to the realization that there might be other aids to education, such as phonograph records, moving pictures, radios, typewriters, cameras. For instance, the Typewriter Educational Research Bureau had a study made over a period of three years by a group of independent educators to determine the value of typewriters in elementary schools. Fifty odd classrooms in twelve cities in the United States were equipped with sufficient typewriters to allow each child to do part of his writing with a machine. The teachers who participated in the experiment gave their time to keep records and make reports in the use of the "writing machine." Almost universally the report was that these young children quickly learned to type fairly neatly and attained an interest and independence in their general school work which they had not shown before.

Some may oppose the use of the typewriter by young children on the ground that if they should later wish to become expert typists, what they had learned would probably have to be unlearned, for in vocational schools, the students are trained in the efficient touch method, whereas young children using typewriters, do so more or less according to their own sweet will. This seems to me to be a silly objection. A child does not have to "unlearn" crawling before he begins to walk, or "unlearn" walking before he begins to run, jump or skip. ~~Experience has shown~~ As far as research experience goes it would seem² that a child who learns to type with one finger is not handicapped if he or she wishes later to learn to use all fingers on both hands. The other objection is that it will tend to prevent children from learning and practicing

longhand writing. This would be a calamity. My feeling is that our schools do not devote enough attention to teaching good handwriting as it is.

I should greatly deplore any tendency to remove from our school system any instruction or urge to write in longhand. I do not see, however, why it is necessary. The fact that I enjoy certain moving pictures does not mean that I do not enjoy paintings, etchings or prints. The fact that I take a photograph has never made me feel any less anxious to have a sketch or a water color of a scene which I have enjoyed. I think, like as in³ every~~thing~~^{else} other case⁴, it is a question of making the machine serve its proper purposes but not letting it become master by wiping out what is an art and a useful art, the ability to write well with one's own hand. There is no question, however, but that the ability to use a typewriter is a great help to any child from the very early grades right through school life and on into later life.

The motion picture has become almost a necessity in the school laboratory, in science class, and in many other courses, but here again there are people who object to its use for one reason or another. I feel that we must learn to use these modern inventions for the good that they bring and yet not let them destroy such things as we had that were good in the past. I noticed in the paper, the other day, that in certain remote parts of Australia children in small rural schools were receiving some instruction daily over the radio. I remember well some years ago talking about the development of television with a wise and forward looking gentleman and he made the suggestion that every school throughout our own country would shortly be able to enjoy not only the voice of noted speakers and lecturers but would actually see them as they talked. Such a thing would mean much in many parts of the country where people of great distinction might never be heard or seen otherwise and where children must now grow up lacking many opportunities for general knowledge and culture, if these inventions are not developed.

I feel personally that we should use everything that comes our way to make education more interesting and consider that every new invention is a possibility for meeting the needs of the individual child. As we develop the true conception of education, which is the maximum of development for each individual according to their capacity, we will be grateful indeed for every new invention which makes this end easier to attain.

Another point I want to stress is one which many teachers have talked to me about and which I myself have experienced, namely, that children are prone to turn to their elders at home for help in their school work. These elders, in their desire to be of assistance, forget that frequently methods which they learned when they were young are not the methods of today and so while it may be helpful if a parent can sit down and explain the fundamental reasons for doing things to a bewildered child, all parents should guard against actually doing any child's work. This is an extremely bad habit and one which makes it difficult for the school to know just where the child stands. If your teaching is faulty, you soon recognize it in the work which the children bring in, but if the children are not giving you their own work, but work done by someone else, then you as a teacher are apt not to know what hasn't been made clear to them.

Incidentally, this habit fosters in children a certain kind of dishonesty for it is the exceptional child that will say "my father or my mother or my older brother did my lessons for me today." Intellectual honesty is something every child should learn. They should never be ashamed of saying that they do not understand a thing but they should learn early to refuse to take credit which they haven't actually earned. We as elders should be careful to emphasize this in whatever we do for them.

VON ZELL

Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt.

THEME MUSIC -- FADE

ORCHESTRA

VON ZELL

In her talk tonight, Mrs. Roosevelt said that she should deplore any tendency to lessen the urge now being given our children to practice handwriting. In this belief, the Typewriter Educational Bureau concurs entirely. When the test of the influence of the typewriter on the work of children in elementary grade schools was made, it is notable that the first grade children who had access to typewriters did three times as much writing by hand as the children who did no typing at all. The reason for this was the greatly increased interest in writing, spelling, and composition -- and the fact that no child was ever allowed to do too much work with a machine. Properly used, a portable typewriter is a spur to more and better writing --

and, in no sense, a substitute for pencil work. For this reason, nothing you can give your child this Christmas will do so much towards making school years better and the life that follows happy and successful, than a portable typewriter. And every boy and girl will be delighted with this real Christmas gift. Visit any typewriter store or department and see the inexpensive and thoroughly dependable portable typewriters now being made by leading companies especially for young fingers. It is the most important Christmas gift you ever selected. (PAUSE) William Daly and his string orchestra continue our programs with the Serenade by Richard Drigo.

DRIGO SERENADE
VON ZELL

ORCHESTRA

The sponsors of this program would like to send a souvenir of this series as a gift to everyone listening in. A beautiful 32-page edition of Mrs. Roosevelt's talks, including next Sunday's broadcast and additional material written by Mrs. Roosevelt, has been printed and one copy will be sent to you free upon request. For your copy, write immediately to the Typewriter Program, Columbia Broadcasting Network, New York City, or in care of the station to which you are listening. A penny post card is sufficient. Just say: "Please send me a gift copy of 'HELPING YOUR CHILD TO SUCCESS' by Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt." Address your request to the Typewriter Program, Columbia Broadcasting Network, New York City, or to the station to which you are listening.

THEME AND FADE
VON ZELL

Next Sunday at this time Mrs. Roosevelt will give her last talk in the present series. Be sure not to miss it.

Transcribed by: Nicole Mortland.

Proofread by: Lee Febos, Angela Baker, Ikerighi David and Matthew Girardi.

Transcribed from a script held in the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹ This is a handwritten interlineation.

² From "As" to "seem" is a handwritten interlineation.

³ "as in" is a handwritten interlineation.

⁴ "other case" is a handwritten interlineation.