Letter to the Editor

MULTISENSORY VERBAL COMMUNICATION METHOD

To the Editor:

Dr. Erwin D. Reidner's "dismay" over Dr. Mark Ross's article, "Implications of Audiologic Success" and Dr. Ross's response, JAAA 1992; 3:295–296, struck the authors as a subject deserving serious discussion. We have been in the hearing profession since its early days, Dr. Zelnick as a dispensing audiologist and Dr. Duffy in both hearing and speech. Together, we have seen great advances in hearing aid technology, but a disappointing lack of progress in giving deaf and severely hearing-impaired children the opportunity to acquire the verbal language and speech skills needed to meet the communication challenges awaiting them in the hearing world. In the early seventies, total communication (sign language) replaced the auditory-visual-oral method of verbal language and speech training in an estimated three fourths of the special schools for the deaf in this country. Since that time a great many children, who had the potential to learn to speak, lost their only chance to acquire adequate verbal language and intelligible speech.

Without intending to do so, Dr. Ross's article and Dr. Reidner's criticism of it have become a part of the traditional "oral-manual" debate. An eclectic approach, which utilizes the best elements of the auditory-visual, the auditory-verbal, and the Cued Speech methodologies, could, if put into practice, mute, if not end, the "oral-manual" controversy. This approach is a highly effective verbal language and speech training program that utilizes all relevant sensory avenues of learning, a phonetic alphabet, and a significant modification of Dr. Orin Corbett's Cued Speech. It is called The Multisensory Verbal Communication Method. Professionals in the hearing, speech language, and deaf education fields, committed to the best interests of deaf and hearing-impaired children, would do well to investigate this methodology.

Ernest Zelnick
Brooklyn, New York

John K. Duffy
Port Washington, New York