ICED 2000

Marc Marschark
Editor, Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education
National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology
University of Aberdeen

Des Power
Greg Leigh
ICED 2000 Organizing Committee and Issue Coeditors

Around the world, responsibility for education varies from being a local issue (e.g., in the United States) to a national one (e.g., in many European countries). The education of deaf students, however, goes beyond local, regional, and even national boundaries, eliciting interest and collaboration from around the world. In that spirit, this issue of the Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education presents selected papers from presenters at the International Congress on Education of the Deaf (ICED) held in Sydney in July 2000.

The ICED may well be the oldest educational congress in the world. The best known—and most notorious—was the 1880 Milan congress, where some “creative stacking” of those allowed to vote provided a large majority for the cry of “eviva la parola” (long live speech), which ushered in a century of dominance of educational approaches based exclusively on the teaching of speech (“oral methods”) (Woll & Ladd, in press). The first ICED actually had been held 2 years earlier—in Paris in 1878. Nineteen congresses in all have been held in most regions of the world, with major breaks only during World Wars I and II. A history of ICED meetings through 1980 has been provided by Brill (1984). In recent years, over 60 nations have had members at the congresses; numbers of delegates attending have ranged from 28 (Paris, 1878) to over 2,000 (Tokyo, 1975) and from 6 countries (Paris, 1878) to 64 (Hamburg, 1985). There were approximately 1,000 delegates from 50 countries at ICED 2000 in Sydney.

Until World War I, congresses tended to be meetings of school administrators, dominated by advocates of the “oral method,” with very few teachers in attendance and almost no deaf people. Several of those congresses actually held separate sections for deaf and hearing participants, and the twain apparently met only in few sessions. At the 1900 ICED in Paris, sessions including both deaf and hearing participants were actually denied!

The first few congresses were dominated by extensive debate on educational methods, also known as the Methods Wars. After the 1880 Milan congress, supporters of spoken language basically controlled those “discussions,” with occasional dissent from Americans and a lone Englishman. The language of these early congresses was that of the home country, and (spoken language) interpreting services appear to have been haphazard at best. Sign language interpreting was not considered necessary, as deaf people were rarely present.

Congresses between the two wars seem mainly to have consisted of reports from heads of schools on “The present state of education of the deaf in [your location here].” The 1933 congress in Trenton, New Jersey (USA), presented a program that was the first to assume what is now the mode, with papers and discussions on curriculum, content teaching, literacy, speech, and lip-reading and listening. (The registration fee at Trenton was $1 each for the 790 people who attended!) Deaf people, and especially deaf American teachers, began to attend the congresses during this period, and there was occasional availability of limited interpreting services.

After World War II, teachers came to dominate attendance at ICED meetings, including deaf teachers and other deaf professionals (except at Manchester,
England, in 1958, where only three deaf people were present—all from the United States; Brill [1984] notes that “no mention was made in any papers of manual communication”). Topics broadened to include newly emerging fields such as audiology, linguistics, and psychological research. The importance of early intervention also was promoted and the emergence of postsecondary education noted. For the first time, significant numbers of university researchers studying deafness-related topics presented papers.

At the Opening Ceremony of the 2000 congress in Sydney, Australia’s Governor-General, Sir William Deane, summed up the spirit that has come to be the expectation of the ICED when he invited participants to “appraise different views in a spirit of genuine inquiry.” He went on to note how important it was for the congress that “the perspectives and opinions of all involved—deaf and hard-of-hearing people, teachers, and the many allied professionals—are all heard in the debate.” That certainly was the experience of the congress in Sydney.

The ICED has no formal secretariat. An ad hoc international committee was formed after the Stockholm congress with its only real function to decide on the site of the ensuing congress. At the 2000 congress in Sydney, congress organizers, the *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, and Oxford University Press joined together to establish a permanent prize for the best poster at the congress, named as a memorial to William C. Stokoe. The paper by Stein Erik Ohna, published in this issue, won the first award of this prize. The second prize will be awarded at the next congress, to be held in Maastricht, The Netherlands, in 2005 (details can be found at www.iced-2day.org).

References
