

## Frederick Matthias Alexander and the Bureau of Educational Experiments

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### Abstract

*In 1916, three educational reformers founded the Bureau of Educational Experiments. Between 1916 and 1919, the Bureau had no clear direction. On the one hand, they offered a clearinghouse gathering and distributing educational information, issuing bulletins, preparing exhibitions, and maintaining a specialized library. On the other hand, they subsidized, initiated, and conducted a range of educational experiments. Before Bureau members eventually found their direction in 1919, they scored a few successes and had their share of failures. One outstanding failure concerns Lucy Sprague Mitchell's plan to investigate F. Matthias Alexander's breathing and habit changing procedures.*

**Key Words:** *Evelyn Dewey (1889-1965), Harriet M. Johnson (1867-1934), Lucy Sprague Mitchell (1878-1967), Margaret Naumburg (1890-1983), Caroline Pratt (1867-1954), Ethel Webb (1866-1955), F. Matthias Alexander (1869-1955), John Dewey (1859-1952), Wesley C. Mitchell (1874-1948), Caleb W. Saleeby (1878-1940), Bureau of Educational Experiments (BEE), Conscious Control, Ovoleo Drug Company, Play School, Public Education Association of the City of New York.*

### Prelude

In August 1914, Great Britain declared war on Austria-Hungary. Immediately the number of clients of Frederick Matthias Alexander in London, England fell off precipitously. On September 12, 1914 Alexander boarded the *Lusitania* for New York. According to the New York Passenger List he set foot on American soil on September 18, 1914. Almost without delay he began teaching his breathing and habit-changing procedures in New York City. In that capacity, Alexander was involved with the Bureau of Educational Experiments between 1916 and 1919. What is the background and what is the history of this entanglement?

### Who was Frederick Matthias Alexander?

During his adolescence and his early adult years, Frederick Matthias Alexander, born in down under Tasmania in 1869 had a history of being a jack-of-all-trades, working irregularly and having a variety of jobs. At night he studied performing arts, especially drama. Sometime late 1890 or early 1891 through 1893, then living in Melbourne where he first had diverse jobs before he began working for the W. H. Sinclair & Co. tea company, Alexander began taking part in amateur performances in drawing room entertainments on programmes that were mixed with music, prose and poetry. He became a leading member and stage manager of *The Olympians*, a Melbourne amateur theatre club under direction of his elocution teacher Fred. Wyndham Hill (e.g., *Wellington Times and Mining and Agricultural Gazette*, 1891). At times Alexander also performed with other companies, like the *Williamstown Amateur Dramatic Club*. These efforts, however, made no lasting impression (e.g., *Williamstown Chronicle*, 1892). The *Melbourne Herald*, on the other hand, reported that Alexander together with co-contestant C. Malmgren won the 1892 contest of the dialogue division of the Victorian Amateur Competitions Association public competition (Alexander, 1894a). In 1893, as a consequence, he gave a number of theatre performances, reported by the *Adelaide Advertiser* and the *Melbourne Table Talk*. It probably was also the time when he solved his serious voice production problems. Allegedly he suffered from attacks of voice loss that occurred with increasing

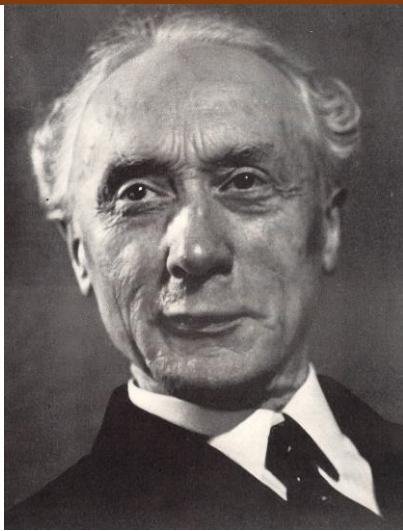
frequency and severity. The problems appear to have continued from late 1891 to 1894, stated Alexander himself in autobiographical notes. In the first chapter in *The Use of the Self*, forty years after the episode, Alexander (1931) described the procedure he claimed he had followed to get rid of his voice production problems, involving many long daily hours of observing his image in a mirror during a time span of a number of years. Newspaper interviews not long before his death in 1955 caused him to say that the procedure involved at least several mirrors and had cost him a full decade of daily all-day practice and observation.

Note, in this context, that Alexander built up a life-long history of bragging and exaggerating out of all proportion. For instance, in 1904, he claimed — in the London, England *Daily Express* (1904) and in the Queensland, Australia *Darling Downs Gazette* (1904) — to have studied the Maoris at close quarters for twelve months while he was in New Zealand (see also the *Adelaide Advertiser*, 1904; Orfeo, 1904). In an undated pamphlet issued in London around 1906, Alexander (n.d.-1) again claimed he “remained in New Zealand for twelve months; his chief reason being that he wished to study that wonderful race, the Maoris — from a breathing standpoint — in their native haunts, and in this way he acquired knowledge that has proved of the greatest value to him in his study of respiration” (p. 4). Actually, in the real adult world, less spectacular and less ‘anthropological,’ he toured New Zealand between mid-March and the end of December 1895 (that is, almost ten months in total), travelling from city to city, performing in local theatres, and teaching elocution, voice culture and drama in Christchurch and in Auckland (Staring, 2005, 2009). Another example: between 1909 and 1942, he publicly accused at least three persons of plagiarizing his breathing and habit-changing procedures. However, he had fabricated false accusations! To finish, he claimed Scottish descent, while his grandparents were English and his parents were born in Tasmania. Or, in the plain and simple words of Cunningham et al. (2007), “Alexander felt ashamed of his ancestry and he lied about it” (p. 49).

### **1894 and 1895: Tasmania and New Zealand**

Early in 1894, Frederick Matthias Alexander chose the adventurous life of an artist after he and his two partners who at the time led the Melbourne W. H. Sinclair & Co. tea company dissolved their partnership by mutual consent (Sinclair, 1894). Alexander returned to his homeland Tasmania as entertainer Mr. F. M. Alexander for a series of performances, beginning at Wynyard, then Waratah, Burnie, Launceston, Lefroy, and Hobart. A number of Tasmanian newspapers — e.g., *The Clipper*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Launceston Examiner*, and *The Tasmanian* — announced his recitals and reviewed them. The *Hobart Mercury* reported that he during his Hobart sojourn from mid-1894 to (southern hemisphere) summer 1895 performed at a number of recital evenings in August, October, and December, and that he organized classes in what he called ‘natural elocution, voice culture, and dramatic training’ (Staring, 2005). Between August 1894 and January 1895, Alexander regularly advertized his elocution and drama instruction in *Tasmanian News*. Previously, in July, the *Hobart Mercury* had already published “Elocution as an Accomplishment,” Alexander’s (1894b) first newspaper article, explaining his ‘natural elocution’ instruction. He indicated that he would rather be called a ‘natural elocutionist,’ and he further avowed that he imparted the method of Charles Hartley from London, England as put forward in *Natural Elocution* (Hartley, n.d.).

In 1895, as indicated above, entertainer Mr. F. M. Alexander toured New Zealand, beginning in Lyttelton and Christchurch where he gave dramatic recitals. In Christchurch he also organized classes in ‘natural elocution, voice culture, and dramatic training.’ By the end of April 1895, he took on another artistic career as a theatrical producer/entertainer travelling on to Wellington, Napier, and Hastings in a three-person theatrical company. Newspapers reported the entertaining evenings. A six months stay in Auckland ended the tour. There Alexander regularly gave recitals and also organized ‘elocutionary entertainments.’ He further taught drama and voice production methods. He stated he did not only teach ‘natural elocution, voice culture, and dramatic training’ but ‘correct breathing’ as well (Staring, 2009). The July 20, 1895 *Auckland Star* printed his article “Speech Culture and Natural Elocution” (Alexander, 1895). The long advertorial shows that he plagiarized, or, in mild phrasing: made extensive *unreferenced* use of, *The Oratorical Trainer* — a book written by Thomas Padmore Hill (n.d.), his Melbourne elocution teacher’s father (Staring & Bouchard, 2002).



**Figure 1: Frederick Matthias Alexander. (Originally published in the September 1941 *Who. Jeroen Staring* Collection).**

### **1896-1904: Australia**

By the end of 1895, Frederick Matthias Alexander left New Zealand, planning to move to the United States (*New Zealand Herald*, 1895), intending to follow theatrical memory exercises entertainer and plagiarism perpetrator ‘Professor’ Loissette (Fellows, 1888) who he had befriended in Auckland (Staring, 2005, 2009). He boarded the *S. S. Tarawera* for Sydney, Australia. Because of family commitments, however, he did not sail across the Pacific. Instead he travelled to Melbourne by train, followed by a short visit to Tasmania to see his family. He then sailed back to Melbourne, where he tried to secure a living as entertainer and teacher of elocution and breathing. In 1896, he issued *The Human Voice: Its Production and Development by New Methods*, a pamphlet illuminating his methods — now missing (e.g., Alexander, 1896b-c; *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896b). In September of that year, the *Melbourne Punch* (1896) wrote that Alexander’s “splendid results achieved in his first term in this city are most gratifying” (p. 227). He also began work as breathing teacher and voice trainer at the Baptist Theological College (Alexander, 1896a, 1899a; Staring, 2005) — still planning to go to the United States (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896a, 1897). However, Alexander did not do as well as he was hopeful of, because in October 1897, according to the *Melbourne Argus*, he was declared insolvent, causes being, amongst others, sickness in family and losses in speculation (Staring, 2009). Next, in 1898, he took on another, additional career — as a theatrical producer, in Melbourne and other cities (e.g., *Age*, 1898; *South Australian Register*, 1898). He continued to give elocution, voice production and breathing instruction, at times also in other cities than Melbourne (Alexander, 1899b; *Bendigo Advertiser*, 1899). In fact, Alexander’s new career progressed so well that he in February 1900 let the Mayor of Wodonga know, “he and two others intended to give a series of entertainments in various parts of Victoria in aid of the Empire Patriotic Fund” (*Wodonga and Towong Sentinel*, 1900, p. 2). The Fund raised money for the soldiers in the Boer War in South Africa in which one of his brothers was fighting. Later that year, Alexander moved to Sydney, where he continued the routine of performing, teaching, and producing theatre performances that he had worked out in New Zealand and Melbourne. A pamphlet (probably published in 1900) states that he taught ‘full chest breathing,’ a substitute for the earlier ‘correct breathing’ (Alexander, n.d.-2).

In 1901, Alexander staged *The Merchant of Venice* and *Hamlet* in Sydney, while he later that year toured diverse Australian towns with his company — reported in scores of Australian newspapers. Next, in 1902, during the first term at his newly established Sydney Dramatic and Operatic Conservatorium, he began teaching the rather unspecified ‘Delsarte System of Expression’ (e.g., Alexander, 1902; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1901). As the conservatorium’s director, he additionally arranged several tours of a company of full course students. Yet, sometimes he experienced sincere difficulties in paying the rent of theatres and had to appear before several Small Debts Courts (e.g., *Maitland Weekly Mercury*, 1903; *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 1902). In 1903, he and students attending the conservatorium once more

went on tour. In spite of that, note that the conservatorium is not even mentioned in a tiny footnote in even one of the Australian performing arts histories! Next, in December 1903, he then launched an advertising campaign in the Sydney newspapers *Evening News*, *Newsletter*, *Sunday Times*, and *Sydney Morning Herald*, promising the publication of a book explaining his new ‘perfect breathing method’ (e.g., Alexander, 1903a, 1904b; *Newsletter*, 1903) — a substitute for the previous ‘full chest breathing’ that was a substitute for the earlier ‘correct breathing.’ Several of these advertisements mention the main topics of the intended book for “Vocal student, Teachers, Laymen, and Experts” as well as the “Practical Value.”

1.—The Treatment of Disease. Prevention or Cure of Throat, Lung (Consumption, etc.), Chest, Heart, Nerve, Liver and Stomach (Indigestion, etc.) Disorders, Post-Nasal (Adenoid) Growths, the After-Effects of Pleurisy, and Impediments of Speech.

2.—The Cultivation and Development of the Human Voice. (Perfect Art in Singing and Speaking).

3.—Physical Culture and Body Building (a perfect system of Physical Development, having a correct and natural primary movement for each exercise). [...]

Practical Value of the Book. This Book will prove of great value and practical assistance to Parents, enabling them to impart to Their Children a perfect breathing method, which will tend to prevent Pulmonary Diseases, Post-Nasal (Adenoid) Growths, and other defects tending to cause nasal stenosis. (Alexander, 1903b).

In the book, Alexander would indubitably explain “Special Sets of Breathing Exercises,” “Special Sets of Nasal and Breathing Exercises,” and “Special Sets of Physical Exercises.” Alexander claimed that the exercises “are most minutely described,” adding, “The author feels justified in stating that the Breathing Exercises are the Most Practical and Complete that have as far been published” (Alexander, 1903b). In a newspaper article entitled “The Prevention and Cure of Consumption” that appeared in *at least three* newspapers in Sydney and Adelaide, Alexander (1903d-e, 1904b) comprehensively conversed a number of the main topics of the intended book. Alexander (1903c) also issued the article as a separate pamphlet!

### 1904-1914: London, England

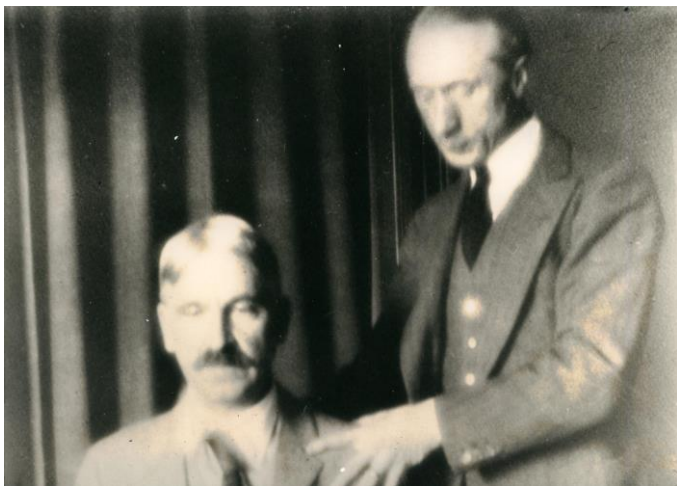
The advertising campaign was excellent. The intended book, however, never materialized. Instead, on April 13, 1904 Frederick Matthias Alexander left Sydney for London, England on board of the *Afric*, after having instructed one of his brothers to pay back his debts. Once in London, he slowly evolved to become a more or less known elocution and ‘respiratory re-education’ teacher (Alexander, 1907). He did compellingly well in an environment of fierce competition with other breathing teachers (Staring, 2003). He even felt self-confident enough to sue the celebrated actor Robert Loraine for not paying the bill he had sent, for lessons that Loraine had taken (e.g., *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 1909; *Nottingham Evening Post*, 1909; *Yorkshire Telegraph and Star*, 1909; see also Bloch, 2004, p. 94, as well as Australian newspapers and magazines; e.g., *Leader*, 1909; Watson, 1909). Additionally, he developed habit-changing procedures under the central idea of ‘conscious control’ (Alexander, 1912). And he wrote a number of letters to the editors of newspapers and journals, several pamphlets, two books, a theatre play, and three booklets (e.g., Alexander, 1906, 1909, 1910, 1911). Moreover, early in 1914, he founded the *Ovoleo Drug Company, Limited* to market products with a special “tasteless” recipe of cod liver oil and eggs, for human consumption — products which he had already promoted in advertorials in October 1913 newspapers (e.g., *London Evening News*, 1913; *London Standard*, 1913), and in 1913 and 1914 notices in *The British Journal of Tuberculosis*, *The Chemist and Druggist*, and *The Pharmaceutical Journal*. Alexander had even obtained trademarks for his recipe in both Canada and the United States (*Canadian Patent Office Record*, 1913; *Official Gazette of the United States Patent Office*, 1913; *Spatula*, 1913). The company, however, never was a success. Soon after, Alexander’s *Ovoleo Drug Company* went bankrupt as a result of fraudulent activity (e.g., *Western Daily Press*, 1916). Note that this was *not* the first time (see above) — and it certainly was not the *last* time — he had to appear before a Court (e.g., *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 1939).

Next, not much later in 1914, the outbreak of World War I interfered with his planned future U.K. career opportunities as breathing and ‘conscious control’ teacher and as a kind of manager of a company of health products. He boarded the *Lusitania* for New York City.

## Alexander's Practice at the Essex Hotel, New York City

Margaret Naumburg helped Frederick Matthias Alexander establish a practice at the Essex Hotel, on the corner of Madison Avenue and 56<sup>th</sup> Street, New York City (Staring, Bouchard, & Aldridge, 2014; Huxley, 2012). Naumburg was a graduate of Barnard College, New York City, one of the so-called Seven Sisters Colleges. After completing the very first International Montessori Teacher Training Course in Rome, Italy in 1913, she had taken lessons in Alexander's methods at his London practice before she returned to the United States in the fall of 1913. Note: There is no shred of evidence that Alexander ever attempted to open a NYC branch office of his Ovoleo Drug Company to market a 'tasteless' cod-liver oil and eggs recipe in the United States. But then again, his practice at the Essex Hotel really, truly thrived! Until 1924, with the exception of the 1922 winter, Alexander would spend winters in the United States. He spent summers in England. One of his first well-off clients in the United States was the ten-year-old granddaughter of Chairman of the Board of the American Locomotive Company Sylvanus Lathrop Schoonmaker. By the end of 1914, Alexander's London assistant, concert pianist and certified Montessori teacher Ethel Webb arrived from England to become the girl's resident teacher. Like Naumburg (see above), Webb had completed the 1913 International Montessori Teacher Training Course in Rome. Earlier, at the start of the twentieth century, her career as a concert pianist was cut short by piano playing-related injuries. For a time, she taught private piano lessons in New York City. Around 1910, Webb began lessons with Alexander in London. Soon she became his assistant.

In May 1915, Alexander sailed by the *Lusitania* for Liverpool, England returning to London. Webb stayed behind in Manhattan. Next, in autumn 1915, Alexander sailed to the United States for a second time, where he began teaching Webb's old New York City friends Mary Potter Bush and her husband millionaire and Columbia University scholar Wendell T. Bush — and on their references Alice Chipman Dewey (philosopher John Dewey's wife) and several of her children. Early in 1916, John Dewey took lessons too (Figure 2).



**Figure 2: John Dewey and Frederick Matthias Alexander. (Courtesy Walter Carrington†, London, England).**

Other influential and well-heeled clients were tobacco moguls James Buchanan Duke and his brother Benjamin Newton Duke, Columbia University intellectuals Richard Morse Hodge, Horace Kallen, and James Harvey Robinson, as well, novelist Waldo Frank who was married to Margaret Naumburg in 1916. Lucy Sprague Mitchell, who worked for the Public Education Association of the City of New York, her husband and Columbia University scholar Wesley Clair Mitchell, and their children took lessons too.

## The Founding of the Bureau of Educational Experiments (BEE)

In the fall of 1911, Lucy Sprague took a four-month sabbatical from her position as Dean of Women at the University of California, Berkeley. During a number of apprenticeships, she worked with leading women in education and social settlement in New York City. In 1913, following her marriage to economist Wesley C. Mitchell she moved from Berkeley to Manhattan and offered her services to the Public Education Association of the City of New York (PEA). At first she worked as a volunteer under Harriet M. Johnson, head of the PEA visiting teachers program (Staring & Aldridge, 2015a). Next, in the fall of 1915, she began working as head of the PEA Psychological Survey. By the end of 1915, the PEA Psychological Survey staff, Sprague Mitchell's husband Wesley Mitchell, Binet testing pioneer and PEA worker Elisabeth Irwin, head of the PEA visiting teacher program Harriet M. Johnson, sex education Special Teacher Laura Garrett, Secretary of the Fairhope League in support of Marietta Johnson's Alabama School of Organic Education Jean Lee Hunt (Staring, 2014), and long-time socialist friends Helen Marot and Caroline Pratt regularly came together to lengthily discuss a plan to set up and organize an educational clearinghouse. In the spring of 1916, they united as the Bureau of Educational Experiments (Staring, 2013a-b, 2014; Staring & Aldridge, 2014a, 2015b). Half a year later, the Bureau opened offices at 70 Fifth Avenue, including a reading room with educational literature. The Bureau strove to be a simple, cooperative, flexible and democratic organization, its aims being both to collect and share information about progressive education, and to conduct, promote, and support educational experiments (*Journal of Education*, 1917).

### **The BEE as Research Institute**

Virtually all minutes of meetings of the Bureau committees are in the Archives of Bank Street College of Education and in the Archives of City and Country School — both in New York City. The two collections, put together, form a complete archive of Bureau minutes, 1916-1920. They show that the Bureau was a clearinghouse gathering and distributing educational information, issuing bulletins, preparing exhibits, and maintaining a specialized library. The Bureau also conducted and subsidized a range of educational experiments.

The first listings of possible research items consisted of topics of interest to educators: teaching, health, administrative problems, and, lastly, school and community. Specific headings included school discipline, sex education, Marietta Johnson's educational principles (see: Staring, 2014), and, surprisingly, Frederick Matthias Alexander's method of changing motor coordination and breathing habits.

Bureau members and various interested outsiders were asked to write proposals for research related to the listings. More than one-and-a-half dozen proposals were handed in during the fall of 1916 and winter of 1917, among these a research plan by Lucy Sprague Mitchell. Purported successes with the Mitchell family and possibly including passionate reviews of Alexander's work by Wesley Mitchell's academic colleagues prompted Lucy Sprague Mitchell in proposing to study Alexander's methods in the setting of Play School, founded by Bureau charter member Caroline Pratt in 1913 (Staring, 2013a-b, 2015).

### **Lucy Sprague Mitchell's 1916 plan to test Alexander's claims**

Lucy Sprague Mitchell's "*Plan Submitted to the Bureau of Educational Experiments. December 26, 1916*" (in the archives of City and Country School, New York City), delivers a fair insight into the ideas and viewpoints expressed by Frederick Matthias Alexander at the time. Even if Sprague Mitchell's plan clearly parrots Alexander's pretentious jargon — demonstrating that he and she had medical and psychological laity — we are very capable to capture the essence of his 1916 'muscular coordination' and 'conscious control' procedures.

I should like to see Mr. Alexander's work in muscular coordination tried in connection with some school where the results in mental as well as in physical terms could be assessed.

Mr. Alexander feels that a great many baffling mental and even moral difficulties can be overcome or at least greatly helped by a direct physical attack on muscular coordination. Most of us are more or less askew. The muscles, particularly of the back, are not doing the work for which they were designed. This means that the work is being done by muscles which are unadapted to the use to which they are being put. Of necessity this involves a strain.

This strain may be evidenced in almost any way, from slight trouble with the eyes or inattention or stuttering, to extreme lack of control, such as inability to walk, or excessive nervous irritability. Mr. Alexander's method of overcoming this strain is peculiarly his own. He believes that one can acquire a new use of one's own body only after the experience of this use has been given to him. Consequently in the beginning he asks his pupils to do nothing; he wishes them quite passive. He himself manipulates them, putting them in the correct position. In this he is amazingly accurate and scientific judged even from an anatomist's standpoint. When this correct position has once been experienced it can be consciously sought for, but not before. In readjusting the equilibrium and bringing about this new coordination, he breaks down the old subconscious and incorrect kinesthetic sense, and establishes a new, conscious kinesthetic sense. Those who have experienced this breaking down will realize what a tremendous mental upheaval it involves. Most physical mal-adjustments have become connected with some sort of discomfort or fear so that it is not a simple matter to inhibit the kinesthetic sense which is closely associated with the pain or fear. When once the breaking down occurs and one consciously recognizes the falseness of the old muscular habits and the kinesthetic sense which they have produced, there is a sudden release not merely of the muscles but of the whole nervous tension.

Once granting Mr. Alexander's premises, it is obvious that his work would show large results with the nervously disordered but mentally normal children such as are in the Laboratory School [of the Neurological Institute in New York City], or with the so-called normal children who of course all have difficulties in a more or less marked degree, such as are found in the Play School.

I would much like to see his work tried out on a considerable number of children that were fairly well known to some members of the Bureau. I think these children should be examined physically and mentally before any treatment by Mr. Alexander and again afterwards, in order to check up his results by the ordinary, scientific standards.

Mr. Alexander suggests the following plan as better adapted to school children than his ordinary method of treating pupils separately in his office. In the first place he would examine the children personally and roughly classify their difficulties according to his diagnosis. Then an assistant of his would work in the school while the children were about their ordinary occupations. She would, from time to time, put each child into the correct position whether the child happened to be standing or sitting at that particular moment. She would keep circulating among the children giving them occasional help instead of giving each a consecutive period of attention.

Mr. Alexander believes that children respond to his work much more than adults just because the muscular habits and the subconscious kinesthetic sense which results from these habits have a much less firm hold upon them. He thinks that very young children, even babies, can acquire what he calls 'conscious control'. Of course, this does not mean analyzed control. He thinks that once one experiences a real coordination, one feels the power and joy of correct functioning, and this feeling of power and joy is thereafter sought – which means, of course, that the seeker is conscious of the coordination. Moreover, he believes that once attained, this conscious coordination is never lost, just because the power and the joy of it keep it functioning. He feels that his work of twenty-three years proves this for he says he has never had a patient who has once attained what he calls 'conscious guidance' go back to his former lack of coordination.

These are large claims and certainly of vast educational import if true. I think it would fit in well with the experimental work of the Bureau to test these claims in a scientific way.

Not all proposals and plans handed in survived the Bureau's scrutiny; a few were approved, several were turned down, and some were reconsidered. To determine which proposals or plans were practical, the Bureau held informal conferences during the winter months of 1917. Study of the minutes of Bureau meetings indicates that Bureau members wished to know more about Alexander's procedures and that they planned to invite him to address them at one of the informal conferences. The November 27, 1916 Executive Committee minutes read, "It was voted that the three following speakers be asked to address the members at future conferences: Mr. Alexander..." (Minutes Executive Committee, BEE, 11-27-1916, p. 1; Archives of Bank Street College of Education, New York City). Note that the same minutes also show that Lucy Sprague Mitchell called for nominations of new Bureau members. Alexander's name was also proposed. "[His name was] referred to the Membership Committee" (Minutes Executive Committee, BEE, 11-27-1916, p. 3; Archives of Bank Street College of Education, New York City). Even so, almost a year later, the

Membership Committee withdrew Alexander's name from the list because he "would probably not be able to give [the Bureau] sufficient time for committee work" (Minutes Membership Committee, BEE, 11-22-1917; Archives of Bank Street College of Education, New York City).

### **1917: First failure to conduct a study of Alexander's claims**

On January 8, 1917 the Bureau's Executive Committee voted on Sprague Mitchell's plan to investigate Frederick Matthias Alexander's methods. "It was voted for to refer the plan to work with Mr. Alexander to the Executive Committee" (Minutes Executive Committee, BEE, 01-08-1917; Archives of Bank Street College of Education, New York City). A week later, Bureau minutes show that Sprague Mitchell's proposal was already reconsidered. Action on her proposal was postponed, as well as arrangements for an informal conference with Alexander, until the entire Bureau of Educational Experiments would know the exact results of lessons given by Alexander to a boy in the Laboratory School of the Neurological Institute in New York City where Bureau member Frederick Ellis's worked as a neurologist. "Plan submitted by Mrs. Mitchell in re Alexander. Voted to postpone action on plan as presented and finance lessons for George Jones of Laboratory School" (Minutes Executive Committee, BEE, 01-16-1917; Bank Street College of Education, New York City). Next, January 22 minutes read, "It was voted to refer the matter of financing lessons with Mr. Alexander for one or two pupils of the Laboratory school to the Executive Committee with power" (Minutes Executive Committee, BEE, 01-22-1917; Bank Street College of Education, New York City). Note that additional information about George Jones and possibly a second child is missing.

It seems, physical examination established that young boy Jones's condition was not robust enough to have lessons with Alexander. The new idea was to study a group of children in Play School following lessons given to them by Alexander. January 29, 1917 Bureau minutes read, "There was a discussion of the plan for work with Mr. Alexander. Voted that Mr. Ellis [of the Neurological Institute] and Miss Pratt [of Play School] be made a committee with power to decide upon a possible substitute plan for the lessons for Geo. Jones agreed upon last meeting" (Minutes Executive Committee, BEE, 01-29-1917; Archives of the Bank Street College of Education, New York City). Bureau minutes of February 13<sup>th</sup> read, "The Alexander plan sub-committee reported that the physical condition in which Geo. Jones was found put lessons with Mr. Alexander out of the question. It had been decided that no special child should be treated but that Miss Pratt's group should be observed and results "before and after" physical examination, shadowgraphs, etc., should be recorded" (Minutes Executive Committee, BEE, 02-13-1917; Archives of Bank Street College of Education, New York City). Next, a week later, Sprague Mitchell expanded her December 1916 research proposal:

I have still another suggestion to make in regard to testing Mr. Alexander's work.

I should like to see the records of something like twenty children under fourteen looked up carefully before and after his treatment. By records, I mean not merely the reports of the parents but whatever records there were concerning these children on the part of physicians, psychologists or schools.

I suggest as an appropriate person to look up these records Miss Frances Brown who is following Mr. Alexander's work very closely. She would be willing to do this as a field worker for two weeks or a month as the Bureau should decide. (Letter written by Lucy Sprague Mitchell, 02-21-1917; Archives of City and Country School, New York City).

Soon, however, other Bureau activities were given precedence, as is shown by Bureau minutes of February 26<sup>th</sup>. The Working Council "voted to drop for the present any further arrangements for conference with Mr. Alexander...as it was thought that the Bureau needed more time for business meetings." Furthermore, "The Working Council voted that Miss Frances Brown be asked to make an investigation of Mr. Alexander's former pupils with a salary for half-time work...until the value of such an investigation has been proved" (Minutes Working Council, BEE, 02-26-1917; Archives of Bank Street College of Education, New York City). And on March 12, Bureau member Evelyn Dewey reported to her colleagues, "No definite plan is possible for the plan for introducing Mr. Alexander's work into a school. The committee has reported the survey of a group of Miss Pratt's children that is being made. Anything further depends on a very vague future" (*Report of Executive Committee, March 12 1917*, p. 3; Archives of City and Country School, New



York City). The survey mentioned by Evelyn Dewey, most probably carried out by Frances Brown — as suggested by Lucy Sprague Mitchell (see above) — is missing.

### 1918: Second failure to conduct a study of Alexander's claims

In May 1917, not long after the developments as sketched above, Alexander travelled to London. Lucy Sprague Mitchell's December 1916 proposal to study Frederick Matthias Alexander's claims (see above) was *not* realized in the course of 1917. When Alexander returned to the United States during the fall of that year, he had amalgamated the 1910 *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, the 1911 *Man's Supreme Inheritance (Addenda)*, the 1912 *Conscious Control* and a number of additional new texts into one long treatise. The enhanced second edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* was released in February 1918. Alexander's publisher widely advertized the book. In February, March and April, book reviews appeared in roughly twenty US newspapers. Alexander's book sold well; the second printing appeared in May, a third printing followed in April 1919, a fourth in August 1919, and a fifth in September 1920.

Without any delay, Porter Sargent (1918) included a review of Alexander's book in the fourth, yearly edition of his well-known *Handbook of American Private Schools*. Sargent assumed, "Dr. Alexander is an educator in the largest sense" (p. 84). Note that other reviewers of Alexander's book also thought he was "Dr. Alexander" (e.g., Wunsch, 1918). Alexander's Columbia University *aficionados* Dewey (1918a-b), Hodge (1918), Kallen (1918), and Robinson (1919a-b), as well as Naumburg's husband Frank (1919) commended the book in reviews and other texts (see also: Lamont & Redmer (Eds.), 1959; Staring, 1989). Noteworthy too: *not even one* of the Columbia University scholars paid any attention to blatant racism in *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (Gilbert, 2014; Staring, 1990, 1992, 1993, 2005)! Unsurprisingly, Alexander wrote a friend in Melbourne, Australia who had published about his methods in 1909 (*Advertiser*, 1909; *Age*, 1909; Leeper, 1909), "The scientific men in this country have accepted the thesis of Man's Supreme Inheritance in a wholehearted way" (Alexander, 1919).

Dewey (1918a), in his "Introduction" in *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, proposed that Alexander's methods are essential in education. Many reviewers agreed. Dora R. Thompson (1919) of the NYC Washington Irving High School, for instance, declared in the very first number of the *Bulletin of High Points in the Work of the High Schools of New York City* that Alexander's book "is considered by Dewey the most important contribution to the advance of man in modern times, and has a message of supreme importance to the American public, especially in this time of educational reorganization" (p. 23). Alexander (1918), of course, was of the same mind: "Give a child conscious control and you give him poise, the essential starting point for education...he will have wonderful powers of adapting himself to any and every environment that may surround him" (p. 136). He sketched his educational procedures as *race culture*, that is, *eugenic* measures to improve humans. In the first (1910) edition of his book, he had already implemented the language, phrases and concepts of English eugenicist and founder of the Eugenics Education Society Caleb Williams Saleeby (e.g., Saleeby, 1904, 1908, 1909) — who also advocated Montessori method, especially *as a path to eugenics* (e.g., Saleeby, 1913). And indeed, in his capacity as Editor responsible for the "New Library of Medicine" at Alexander's publisher Methuen in London, Saleeby had exclusively aided Alexander in publishing *Man's Supreme Inheritance* in 1910. Next, in the new (US) edition of the book, Alexander (1918) devoted an entire new chapter to "Race Culture and the Training of the Children," that is, factually, *eugenics* and *education*. Hence it makes perfect sense that University of California zoologist Samuel J. Holmes (1924) did not even hesitate a fraction of a second to include *Man's Supreme Inheritance* in his *Bibliography of Eugenics*!

In the *ill-famed* "Race Culture and the Training of the Children" chapter of the new *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, Alexander (1918) disapproved of music, dancing, drawing, and carpentering in "so-called 'free' schools" and he belittled the teachers who popularized,

...the practical side of two of the channels for self-expression, which are specially insisted upon in schools where the new mode is being practised, namely, dancing and drawing. A friend of mine always refers to them as the two D's, a phrase that refers very explicitly to these two forms of damnation when employed as fundamentals in education.

The method of the "Free Expressionists" is to associate music with the first of these arts. Now music and dancing are, as everyone knows, excitements which make a stronger emotional appeal to the primitive than to the more highly evolved races. No drunken man in our civilisation ever reaches the stage of anæsthesia and complete loss of self-control attained by the savage under the influence of these two stimuli. But in the schools where I have witnessed children's performances, I have seen the first beginnings of that madness which is the savage's ecstasy. Music in this connection is an artificial stimulus and a very potent one. And though artificial stimuli may be permissible in certain forms of pleasure sought by the reasoning, trained adult, they are uncommonly dangerous incitements to use in the education of a child of six. (pp. 124-125).

According to Alexander in his book it is thoroughly counterproductive to offer free movement to children without some kind of guiding intervention. He steadfastly stated,

I have seen children of various ages amusing themselves — somewhat inadequately in quite a number of cases — by drawing, dancing, carpentering, and so on, but in hardly a single instance have I seen an example of one of these children employing his physical mechanisms in a correct or *natural way*. (p. 132).

I am convinced by long observation and experiment that the untrained child has not the adequate power of free expression. (p. 137).

Alexander's Columbia University scholar clients clearly praised his (1918) *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. On the other hand, his book caused some commotion amid progressive educators. James J. Walsh's (1923) *Cures: The Story of Cures That Fail* that indicates a few of the critiques is downright hilarious. Walsh dedicated a complete chapter to Alexander's claims in his famous *Cures*, for instance, of having discovered a new method of voice culture.

Of course he discovered a new method of voice culture and voice production. Did any one ever know a professor of elocution or of voice culture who was deeply interested in his work who did not discover an absolutely new method of training the voice? (p. 254).

Walsh satirized what he thought was Alexander's gobbledygook jargon addressing eugenics and education. In the following quote, he first cited a typical line from Alexander's book before he made the deep-seated reasoning in the quote completely ridiculous:

"The first principle of all training from the earliest years of child life must be on a conscious plane of coördination, reëducation and readjustment which will establish a normal kinæsthesia or muscular discrimination." It would make an excellent exercise for a class in English composition to put that sentence into shorter words and thus make its meaning or lack of meaning clearer than it is, but above all show how little meaning there is in it. (pp. 256-257).

Walsh also sneered at Robinson's (1919b) book review, ostentatiously titled "The Philosopher's Stone" or "La Piedra Filosofal" in a Spanish translation (Robinson, 1919a), Dewey's (1918a) "Introduction" in Alexander's book, and at Columbia University scholars who took 'conscious control' lessons. "F. Matthias Alexander from Australia specializes in curing university professors — particularly professors of history and psychology and philosophy — of their ills by his personal influence and his breathing exercises" (Walsh, 1923, p. 30). He found Dewey "one of the best educated men in the country who is the head of the department of philosophy of one of our most important universities" (pp. 265-266), if only he would honor the Latin maxim *sutor ne ultra crepidam*. Walsh (1925) would later critically review Alexander's 1923 book *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual*.

Philosopher and education journalist Randolph Bourne (1918a-b), neurologist, psychoanalyst, and Professor of psychiatry at Columbia University Frederick Peterson (1919a-b), journalist, educator and originator of group psychotherapy Samuel Slavson (1921), as well as art historian and educator Carl Zigrosser (1918) *fiercely* criticized Alexander's viewpoints. What caused concern among them — definitely not the least educators — was not only Alexander's (1918) evolution theory, or his phraseology, but also the fact he condemned music, carpentering, dancing, and drawing, in the "so-called 'free' schools" and that he even ridiculed the teachers. Bourne (1918a), for instance wrote, sarcastically, "If the school must wait until every one of its children has learned conscious guidance and control, the next step in evolution will be very long delayed" (p. 28). Slavson (1921) dismissed Alexander's arguments as pure 100 % nonsense: "Whatever the deductions of a kinaesthetic specialist may be, common observations of normal cases and the opinion of

teachers qualified to judge lead to a deduction contrary to that of Mr. Alexander's. In educating children, we must abandon the conception that children are incapable creatures." Peterson (1919a) concluded, "Now, what is the method?...From [Alexander's] book of well over 300 pages, one obtains with difficulty a limited general outline of the method...I judge it is not intended that any but the writer should be able to employ this new cure, so that the patient to obtain his supreme inheritance would have to pay doubtless a considerable inheritance tax" (p. 1738). And lastly, Zigrosser (1918) stated, "Mr. Alexander does not always possess the open mind for which he makes so fine a plea. Otherwise, he would not be so extremely limited as to assert that music has the same effect as alcoholic intoxication, or that dancing is harmful for children" (p. 250).

On the other hand, again without any delay, yet also without attribution or reference to Alexander, Sargent (1918) included an affirmative elaboration of Alexander's phrases in his *Handbook of American Private Schools* — thus virtually neutralizing the charged nature of the idiom. In this respect it is astonishing that he connected Alexander's phraseology in a direct way to both Naumburg and to Pratt, and to the Bureau of Educational Experiments. One wonders whether Sargent had inside information, or perhaps even contacts with Alexander.

A considerable number of schools of "free expression" have developed in the last few years. Of this type are Miss Naumburg's, Miss Pratt's and several other schools in New York City. The "free expressionists" follow the method of the Play School but they go much further in theory. They believe in freeing the child as far as possible from all outside interference and restraint, and in placing him in the right environment with the right materials and then leaving him entirely undirected that he may feel "freely express himself." Some of the "free expressionists" use music as a powerful stimulus to induce the freest expression. They are carrying out interesting experiments, but one dare risk the statement that this is not education. Education involves training, the establishment of right habits and right motives.

The "Bureau of Educational Experiments" of New York City is an organized group of experimentally minded men and women who are interested in promoting and spreading more of educational experiments and particularly those on "free education." (p. 29).

Alexander biographer Bloch (2004) speculates whether Alexander was directly or indirectly associated to Margaret Naumburg's Children's School. Now, it is highly possible that Alexander had read Naumburg's (1917) explanation of the curriculum of her Children's School in a Bureau Bulletin, but he did not like the association she made between analytic psychology and his own procedures. If so, he probably detested the last lines in this quote:

In [the] field of physical co-ordination, a new and remarkable method of readjusting the child's bodily control has been developed by Mr. F. Matthias Alexander. The technique of his method has a surprising analogy with the new analytic psychology...The correlation of these two approaches to the sources of mental and physical activity constitutes a real method of *re-education*. Education in the sense of 'leading forth' what is already there is not enough. The child comes to the school with physical inhibitions and emotional fixations which must be analyzed back to their elementary components, in order that his energies may be released for proper growth. With true control, the child can now use his powers for expression and creation...Of great importance in analyzing the child's psychic life is the buried material that comes to light in his spontaneous creative activities. Among these are his first free drawings, his early attempts at dancing, making up of songs, and the beginnings of play...Through them much of the material of primitive thinking is brought forth symbolically by the child, long before language and writing become accessible as means of free expression...For this reason, I encourage children to draw, dance, and so on, without external plan or suggestion. (pp. 9-10).

According to Bourne (1918a), Alexander had done "work in experimental schools in this country" (p. 28). Is it, in truth, possible that Alexander had taught his procedures in Naumburg's Children's School, and/or in Pratt's Play School? Even though Naumburg had helped Alexander establish his practice at the Essex Hotel in 1914, and although she had told a *New York Tribune* journalist in May 1915 that her school's curriculum was also based on Alexander's procedures (Rodman, 1915), it is feasible that he never observed classes at Children's School. Yet, there is evidence that Alexander observed, and possibly also taught, children in Caroline Pratt's Play School (see above). Furthermore, Wesley C. Mitchell's diaries show that Alexander definitely met Pratt in early November 1916. Mitchell himself brought Pratt to Alexander's

teaching rooms at the Essex Hotel. Later that month Pratt and Alexander dined with the Mitchells, discussing Alexander's method over diner (Mitchell, 1916). Hence it is more than likely that the scolding of progressive education teachers "Free Expressionists" refers to Pratt and Play School teachers than to Naumburg and her Children's School teachers. But, there are other, exhilarating indications reinforcing the preceding assumption. During a November 4, 1918 meeting members of the Executive Committee of the Bureau of Educational Experiments were discussing the possibility of having someone trained by Alexander placed as a teacher in his methods in Play School. Evelyn Dewey, one of the Bureau members present, strongly objected: "There was also discussion regarding the possibility of choosing a young woman to take training with Mr. Alexander. Miss Dewey expressed her doubt of the possibility of placing a student of Mr. Alexander's in the Play School owing to the fact that Mr. Alexander had expressed entire disagreement with the Play School program and the theory on which it is based. No definitive instances of this disagreement were cited. No action was taken" (Minutes Working Council, BEE, 11-04-1918; Archives of Bank Street College of Education, New York City). Lucy Sprague Mitchell, backed by her husband Wesley C. Mitchell, attempted to reconcile opinions by writing a memorandum: "*For Discussion by the Bureau of Educational Experiments: Statements to be Challenged by the Bureau of Educational Experiments at a Bureau Meeting to be held Monday, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1918 at 8 P.M.*" (in the Archives of Bank Street College of Education, New York City). Sprague Mitchell's statements relating to Alexander read,

There are several expressions which recur again and again in Bureau discussions which assume a common understanding of these terms which again implies a common agreement lying behind their definitions. Three of these expressions I think might well be brought forward together, made to declare themselves in language as simple and unequivocal as possible, and the educational implications of these declarations dragged into clear light at the same time. These three expressions are:

The Teaching of science.

The Play School Method.

Alexander's system of conscious control.

[...].

3. Mr. Alexander's System of Conscious Control.

Statement.

Mr. Alexander is pleading for us as wide an extension [*sic*] of conscious reasoned control over our bodily and mental activities as we are capable of in our present state of development. Animals are completely guided by sub-conscious impulses; primitive men and children are still largely under the domination of unreasoned desire; the more highly evolved the man, the more of his life is guided by a thought-out plan. It is really a plea to analyze and understand the life situations in which we find ourselves so that we may intelligently utilize our full powers. Such a thesis needs no pleading. The only reason, it seems to me, that Mr. Alexander's case needs argument is that he applies this general and accepted attitude to a specific sphere of life which has generally been thought of as out of reach of the conscious – or perhaps, more accurately, has generally not been thought of at all. Most of us have not thought of bodily functioning as among the conditions to be analyzed, known, and so controlled. He rests his proof that they can be, on empirical grounds: that is, he teaches people to be really conscious (which means able to analyze) their kinaesthetic sense. He does this not by telling them how to breathe, how to hold internal organs, how to stand, how to walk, etc. For the only avenues of approach we have to these subconsciously controlled areas of ourselves is through what he calls a "debauched kinaesthetic sense", — debauched because it has been left neglected, moulded by chance influences into rigid unconscious and unreasoned habits. His method of breaking through this viscous [*sic*] circle is, therefore, not at first to tell his pupils what to do which makes them concentrate on the end to be attained but actually to manipulate their bodies so that they do breathe correctly, hold their internal organs correctly, stand and walk correctly. This he does in analysed steps so that his pupils not only get the experience of correct functioning but get the experience of the various motions which go to make up this functioning. This gives them a consciousness of the "means whereby" and enables them to seek the experience for themselves. He thinks he has proved empirically how many of our bodily and mental distortions are directly attributable to the strains coming from misuse of our bodies

– strains which can be relieved by dragging these bodily activities into our consciousness and so giving us control over them.

His criticism [in *Man's Supreme Inheritance*] of so called "Free Schools" is that they encourage "free expression" in uncoordinated children who are incapable of an expression which really expresses them. Such schools think of the end and ignore the means whereby. These attempts of the children to express before they have control of their means of expression inevitably lead to faulty habits which again inevitably bring faulty mental habits. His remedy is to teach children coordination before tempting them into activities which need coordination in order to be successful. For example he would teach a child the way to hold a pencil with least expenditure of energy before turning him loose with crayons and paper. This does not necessarily mean he would teach the child to draw in the conventional sense — dictate for him the principles by which to guide themselves of design, color, perspective, etc. He says "these directions involve no interference with what the child has to express; they represent merely a cultivation and development of the means whereby he may find adequate and satisfying release for his potentialities."

#### Implications.

Mr. Alexander's pupils learn by experiencing ["not" inserted by pencil] through imitation or instruction. Through this experiencing they learn control. This method of teaching applied within a class room would make teaching dynamic and would equip the children to be experimenters. His analysis of the learning process is such as the Bureau could completely subscribe to. This I believe in spite of the apparent inconsistency (which is in reality more of a fragmentary statement than an inconsistency) when he says: "There are two methods by which a child learns. The first and, in earlier years, the predominant method is by imitation, the second is by precept or directly administered instruction, positive or negative." (*Man's Supreme Inheritance*.)

Since coordination is a condition which permits correct functioning, the sooner it is done the better. It should be begun with little children as a basis for learning either in or out of the school.

#### General Proposition:

The teaching of science, the Play School method as applied to little children, and Mr. Alexander's system of conscious control are consistent with one another. They properly belong together in a laboratory school. They would strengthen one another if they were protected in conjunction.

#### Applications:

The Play School is teaching science but not the sciences. This is the proper pedagogical procedure for young children.

Mr. Alexander's attitude towards bodily functioning is scientific and his method of teaching sound since it is based on a sound analysis of the learning process.

The Play School is attempting to give the children conscious control over themselves. Since the physical is basic, the Play School might consistently make the effort to secure coordination — in Mr. Alexander's sense — for its children. Logically this should be done for babies. Failing this it is undesirable to postpone all teaching until coordination can be brought about. Specifically in the Play School Mr. Alexander's work in physical coordination should be carried on with the other work. Though fundamental it can not be made preliminary. (pp. 1, 3-5).

Minutes of the November 25<sup>th</sup> Working Council meeting wrap up the opinion exchange by reporting the *communis opinio* that perhaps the best way to end disagreement would consist of inviting Alexander to explain his views in person. "A proposal was made at the end of the meeting that Mr. Alexander should be asked to present to the Working Council an explanation of his theories of co-ordination" (Minutes Working Council, BEE, 11-25-1918; Archives of Bank Street College of Education, New York City). Note that there is no evidence at all that Alexander ever explained his vision at any meeting of members of the Bureau of Educational Experiments!

November and December entries in Wesley Mitchell's (1918) diary prove that he — BEE Trustee — also endeavoured to intervene, trying to calm emotions. His attempts to lower high-risen passions, and those of others led during a Working Council meeting to the following rephrasing of Evelyn Dewey's November 4 outburst. "Miss Dewey doubted if Mr. Alexander's work could be put into any experimental school since he

has a formulated theory of education of his own” (Minutes Working Council, BEE, 11-27-1918; Archives of Bank Street College of Education, New York City).

Interestingly, minutes of a Play School teachers meeting held the same day (November 27<sup>th</sup>) show there was discussion among the teachers regarding what to do about serious flat footedness of a particular child.

Mrs. [Lucy Sprague] Mitchell said Mr. Alexander considers flatfootedness most subtle sign of lack of coordination and that it disappears as coordination is achieved. Mr. [Alexander] would consider casts for his feet worst possible treatment, wrong approach to problem. Question arose what to do under circumstances and Miss Pratt recommended taking up with [Bureau psychologist] Dr. [Buford J.] Johnson question of giving him treatment under [Alexander’s assistant] Miss [Ethel] Webb instead of casts and jacket. (*Minutes of Staff Meetings 1918-1919*, p. 6; in the Archives of City and Country School, New York City).

Even though treatment under Alexander’s assistant Webb was considered for the flat footed Play School child, minutes of the February 6, 1919 teachers meeting show that Play School teachers did *not* approve teaching of Alexander’s “method” on a more general level in their school without means of recording results and making scientific analysis thereof:

Miss Pratt told of [someone’s] offer to do work in the school on Alexander method. Discussion following brought out agreement on comparative valuelessness of treatment without accompanying accurate physical records to make scientific test possible. (*Minutes of Staff Meetings 1918-1919*, p. 12; in the Archives of City and Country School, New York City).

### No study of Alexander’s procedures

Intriguingly, Evelyn Dewey attended only one more Bureau meeting. In January 1919, she resigned from all Bureau activities (Minutes Executive Committee, BEE, 01-28-1919; Minutes Working Council, BEE, 02-17-1919; Archives of Bank Street College of Education, New York City). There was only one more mention of Frederick Matthias Alexander in later (surviving) minutes of Bureau meetings: “Mrs. [Sprague] Mitchell reported a discussion with Dr. Kallan [*sic*] who had taken work with Alexander with a view of writing up his theory and treatment. The committee expressed itself as interested to get Dr Kallan’s judgment on the problem of individual children and the school children in general, and asked Mrs. Mitchell to find out if Dr. Kallan would also be interested” (Minutes Health Committee, BEE, 11-06-1919, p. 1; Archives of Bank Street College of Education, New York City). “Dr. Kallan” in the quote is Columbia University scholar Dr Horace Kallen who had written an animated review of Alexander’s *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* for *The Dial* (Kallen, 1918; see also Lamont & Redmer (Eds.), 1959), and who later would refer to Alexander’s work again (e.g., Kallen, 1943).

Concluding, while Thomas C. Dalton (2002) almost unerringly enlightened parts of the above story in his superbly written *Becoming John Dewey*, the larger big picture of the history of Alexander and the Bureau of Educational Experiments remained an utter mystery until today. The Bureau of Educational Experiments never conducted a study of Alexander’s procedures. Of course, further research is necessary.

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