

# COSMETICS AND COSMETOLOGY IN GENERAL EDUCATION

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WHEN COMPARED with cosmetics, of which the history has been unbroken for about six thousand years, the branch of study called cosmetology, which can boast of only sixty years, is so relatively new that it is still difficult to view it objectively and evaluate it.

For all in the industry the specific meaning and connotations of *cosmetics* as products have been more than adequately defined by law. The scope and implications of *cosmetology* are not so generally understood, and many in the industry seem to believe that it is quite outside of their particular interests. As it is a vast field through which cosmetic products and accessories reach millions of users, everyone should be at least curious about what goes on and how possibly mutual interests might be served.

Cosmetology has been defined variously, from merely "A treatise on dress and bodily cleanliness" (1) to "The art or practice of cosmetic treatment of the skin, hair, and nails and professional application of cosmetics" (2). Most broadly, then, the term could cover all use of cosmetic products and treatments by consumers in their personal grooming, but—at least in the United States—cosmetology has come to mean the use of cosmetic products and treatments in beauty salons, and the educational preparation of those that work in them.

The terms *cosmetology* for the work, and *cosmetologist* as the analogous term for the practitioner, were adopted a few years after the National Hairdressers Association was founded (1921), on the recommendation of C. W. Godefroy of St. Louis, then a vice president of the Association and chairman of its committee on technical terms. They satisfied the long time demand by women shop owners whose training and services not only included but also far exceeded the implications of the old generic term *hairdresser* (3).

The word cosmetology has occasionally been questioned by those in the so-called learned professions, and even by legislators. There it was in the respected dictionaries, however, showing appropriate etymology and venerable ancestry, so it has maintained its legitimacy. It has been

made official by the (now called) National Hairdressers and Cosmetologists Association, in an effort to discourage the use of awkward neologisms.

### HISTORY OF PROFESSIONAL COSMETOLOGY

The movement toward formal education for what was first called *beauty culture*—now cosmetology—in the U.S.A. originated in Chicago. Documentary evidence on all the early claims is either not available or inconclusive, but it seems to prove that the first real school grew out of a school for barbers.

Until late in the 19th century, all the arts in barbering and hairdressing—that is, shampooing, dyeing, bleaching, shaving and haircutting for men, hairdressing for women and the making of hair pieces for both—could be learned only through a long and arduous period of personal bondage, called apprenticeship, with some established master (4). Almost without exception, the best-known hairdressers of the time were men, born in Europe, and trained by this method. Many of them went regularly to the homes of their patrons, but “hairdressing parlors” were gradually opened in at least all the larger cities throughout the country.

Meanwhile, the rapid development of the cosmetic industry was making commercially available all types of products which had formerly been made in the home. Much of the demand for these products had been engendered through the publications of professional beauties (5), the newly-created beauty editors on periodical staffs (6) and others (7), all of which enthusiastically featured beautifying products and treatments for scalp, face and hands. Skilled experts were soon in demand to administer such treatments correctly, either in or outside of the home. The modern “beauty shoppe” was on its way.

At first there was no way of training these operators except by apprenticeship to some self-appointed authority. It soon became apparent that although the arts of hairdressing could still be learned by long fumbling practice of the what-to-do-and-how-to-do-it, required for the hand-training in all trades, any treatment that calls for the manipulating of bodily structures must be learned correctly at once, and to mechanical skill must be added judgment—the when-to-do-it-and-why, required for the head-training in all professions (4).

The practical work, therefore, had to be supplemented by classroom instruction in anatomy and physiology, some simple dermatology and some physical therapy, for the principles of massage and the use of electrical and mechanical devices. Fundamental also were the knowledge and practical application of sanitary regulations, “new-fangled ideas,” unheard-of or little heeded, by the established apprentice-trained hairdressers.

The first school for barbers was opened late in 1893 by Arthur B. Moler, a practicing barber of Chicago, as a protest against the three years of

apprenticeship then required for training in his trade. The success of this school led to the opening in 1896 of an associated school for training in services especially for women patrons. The first rudimentary textbook on beauty culture was issued in the same year; and through a need for competent instructors in the new type of training, the Moler Schools established in 1899 the first class for the preparation of teachers (8).

Within the first quarter of the 20th century many private schools were opened all over the United States. A recognized leader in the educational movement at this time was Mrs. Ruth J. Maurer (1870–1945), wife of a physician of LaCrosse, Wis. She opened the first Marinello School in Chicago (1905), especially to train operators on treatments for the use of certain creams and other products that she had been successfully marketing for some time. Being professionally-minded, she encouraged the fraternizing of, and exchange of ideas among, those in all branches of the trade. To this end, she organized a National Convention of Hairdressers (1912); and short summer schools for her own graduates so that they could keep abreast of all latest developments in their work (9).

Most of the schools, however, were general training centers for all the various arts and skills in beauty culture, using any and all products available through their dealers. Some offered a comprehensive curriculum; others gave certificates for special courses in hairdressing, facial treatments or whatever was required.

It was not long before the vocational possibilities of beauty culture as a suitable occupation for women were officially recognized. In 1917, Mrs. Anna Lalor Burdick (1869–1944), who had been active in teaching and vocational guidance in her native state of Iowa, was appointed Agent for Industrial Education for Girls and Women, in the United States Office of Education. Through her efforts beauty culture was immediately listed as a possible course in the public vocational high schools; and in 1918 the first course of the kind was added to the curricula of the Manhattan Trade School for Girls (now the Mabel Dean Bacon Vocational High School) in New York.

Sooner or later, practically all the schools of hairdressing added scalp and facial treatments to their offerings, the "treatment schools" added hairdressing, permanent waving and hair coloring, and thus, even before the adoption of a State Law required it, most schools of beauty culture offered comprehensive curricula.

By now (1956), cosmetology is being taught in about 1100 schools throughout the United States and its dependencies. Of these, over 900 are privately owned; and nearly 200 are public vocational and industrial high schools which are in about two-thirds of the states (10). The conditions and facilities vary widely. In some schools one instructor handles all the work, whereas in some public schools in the large cities cosmetology

has attained the status of a department with a full teaching staff. All schools of any size, public and private, have both general instructors and specialists for certain branches.

In addition to the regular schools, instruction centers are maintained by many manufacturers, where teachers and licensed cosmetologists may go for special information and practice in the use of proprietary products and treatments. Some of these companies also send out their expert technicians to give instructions through selected dealers and demonstrations to the trade at large. Finally, there are some "Advanced Schools" in which, however, the instruction seems to be limited to the latest methods and modes in hair styling. (We seem to have made a full circle.)

#### SCOPE OF MODERN COSMETOLOGY

Depending on the observer's point of view, the composite subject of cosmetics-and-cosmetology has been characterized as an art, a science, a profession, a trade, a business, an industry, a racket and a game. Any branch of education and trade that spreads as rapidly as cosmetology did in its early years must inevitably come under consideration for the delimitation of its province and some form of legislative control.

Forty-six states (all except Delaware and Virginia), the District of Columbia, Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico now have laws to govern cosmetology (10). Since 1919, when the first law was enacted (Wisconsin), much has been done to establish uniformity and reciprocity. Despite the *Basic Model Bill*, first drafted by the National Hairdressers Association in 1924 and since adopted by many states (11), there are still notable disparities in preliminary education, hours in course of training, even in the governing body. This last may be the Department of Education, or Health, or Licenses; but it is usually a politically appointed Board of Cosmetology (one of many names) which, itself, varies in the number and qualifications of its members. In the face of such conditions the progress made by the study and practice of cosmetology during the past sixty years has been truly remarkable.

In all the laws the regions of the body that may be treated in cosmetology are specifically limited to the scalp, face, neck, upper chest and back, arms and hands. The essential services permitted include: cleansing, cutting, dressing, styling, temporary and permanent curling and straightening, bleaching and coloring of the hair; manicuring; preventive and corrective treatments, by application of cosmetics, massage, devices, or otherwise, of the hair and scalp, face and other regions specified in the law. Cosmetic care of the lower legs and feet is also offered in many salons.

It has often been said, and many early textbooks are available as evidence, that "The founders of professional cosmetology did not know what to leave out." There was good cause for apprehension on the part of the

physicians in some of those literally incredible compilations of poor English, garbled Greek and Latin, pseudo-science, revolting pictures of diseases of skin, hair and nails, and detailed descriptions of many rare conditions of nails and glands that even experienced dermatologists almost never see. It is now generally accepted as unwritten law by all ethical owners of schools and salons that it is strictly forbidden for any cosmetologist to make diagnosis of, and offer treatment for, any serious condition of the skin and any internal condition whatever. As a further protection in many states, any service that impinges on controlled medical practice, such as body massage, chiropody, electricity for superfluous hair, is restricted to those that hold licenses for these branches.

A second glance through the list of permitted services and treatments should show that the subject matter of modern cosmetology is a fairly well-defined body of knowledge. As legally constituted, it should be considered, not as "hairdressing-and-cosmetology," but as an all-embracing whole, comprising branches that are both basically artistic (hair-dressing, manicuring, make-up) and basically scientific (hair and skin treatments, permanent waving, hair coloring).

In addition to the mechanical skills, therefore, the well-trained cosmetologist should know:

- (a) Basic art: Color, line, proportion;
- (b) Basic science: Appropriate anatomy, dermatology, physical therapy, sanitation;
- (c) Related subjects: Physiology and hygiene (for personal living), chemistry (simple reactions, tests), psychology (for personal relations).

Because the practice of cosmetology is also a business, prospective salon owners also need to know:

- (d) Business methods: Management, accounting, customer relations insurance, applicable laws.

Since World War II, there has been a gradual change in general cosmetology, at least in many private schools. Under the educational privileges of the G.I. Bill of Rights, hordes of young men enrolled in the approved schools of beauty culture where formerly the students had been almost exclusively women. Excused from manicuring and facial work, the men were permitted to fill their time with extra work on hair but most of them have been interested in little more than hair styling. Many salons in New York and other large centers have dropped all care of the skin—even make-up service—and feature only hairdressing, permanent waving, hair coloring and manicuring, just as did the "masters" of sixty years ago. In other parts of the country, however, general cosmetology has held its

own; the schools still teach, and the salons still promote all kinds of treatments that might be requested of them.

In contrast to the private schools, which must cater to all passing fads and whims, cosmetology in the public schools has progressed steadily and solidly, especially where this work is under the guidance of some official department of education. The course may be spread over two or three years of their high school curriculum, and is supplemented by English, mathematics, social studies, art, science, physical education and other suitable courses from the regular school program. As a result, these young women are graduated as broadly educated, good general operators. Many of them find positions as laboratory assistants or technicians in industry, where their background serves as a fine starting-point for special training.

Someone well known in the industry has expressed the opinion that the teaching of the fundamentals in cosmetology might best be left to the public schools, and that the private schools should be permitted to specialize in "brush-up" courses, hair styling, and the new products and treatments, especially in permanent waving and hair coloring, which the manufacturers continually rush into the field with almost bewildering rapidity. The private schools would automatically protest any such idea as unfair, because they are in business for profit, and they draw most of their students from men and women well over the age of high school students. Cosmetology is suggested by guidance counselors as a good vocational outlet for older persons, and those with proved aptitudes and skills can readily establish a position and earn a good living. Unless the public schools everywhere offer their facilities to adults in evening classes, these people can go only to the private schools (12).

#### HIGHER EDUCATION FOR COSMETOLOGY

Two questions about cosmetology that are frequently asked by those in industry, by teachers and others, are:

"Where does cosmetology fit into higher education?"

"Where can one go, and what would one have to study, to acquire a good background for cosmetology?"

In seeking the answers, this investigator was steered into the Department of Physical Education and Health at New York University, and the wisdom of the advice was soon manifest. The two branches of study have much in common. Both can trace their origin to Hippocrates, who outlined dermatology and taught the therapeutic value of fresh air, bathing, sunlight, massage and exercise so well that bodily perfection became a cult during the Golden Age of Greece. Both were partially eclipsed during the rise of Christianity, but beautification survived in medicine—at least until the 16th century—whereas physical education was practically

nonexistent until the 19th century. Again the interests coincide through the organizing of physical therapy and standard systems of massage. Finally, physical education was wrested from the hands of the mountebanks and "big muscle boys" and organized professionally (1885) by William G. Anderson (1860-1947), long associated with this work at Yale University.

One season of study and observation showed that an affiliation of cosmetology with physical education and health would be mutually beneficial. Information on the correct use of cosmetics can be fitted into instruction on physical education and health on any educational level, from personal hygiene and grooming for children through personality development and esthetics at all ages. Well-planned courses in a school of education would be the best means of disseminating such knowledge quickly to all levels. Teachers, both men and women, should be taught the altruistic value of a good appearance, and the intelligent use of whatever cosmetic products and treatments they require. This is especially important to teachers of physical education, health, home economics and cosmetology, all of whom should look like prime specimens of their calling. From study of all aspects of the problem was evolved an aphorism: "The correct use of cosmetics is the final artistic touch in the scientific care of the well body" (13).

Even flattering cosmetology with its early dignified designation of *cosmetic therapy* cannot find for it a logical place in professional medicine again. Physicians in general are all too busy in caring for the sick, and except for those that work in physical education and health they can give little time to the well body. Even dermatologists know that if they wish to extend their activities to cosmetic care of the healthy skin they must obtain supplementary information and experience in schools of cosmetology and from specialists in industry. A course on the principles of cosmetology in medical colleges would undoubtedly be of interest to those in dermatology, physical therapy and psychiatry. Otherwise most specialists would probably not object to going to a department of physical education and health for information on this branch of science which their professional forebears abandoned when they decided to concentrate on curative care of the human body.

Just now, any expression of this kind is but wishful thinking. Many zealous would-be instructors must learn that the best impetus for such innovations in any college is a concerted demand from avid would-be students.

#### THE TEACHING OF COSMETOLOGY

The second question in the preceding section is most frequently asked by teachers of cosmetology, or prospective teachers who realize that they

must know much more than their students. The missing unit in the whole program of regulating cosmetology has always been the recruiting and training of teachers. The requirements for preliminary qualifications and professional training vary widely throughout the United States. It is hoped that the former may be standardized with: (1) Graduation from high school; (2) complete course in cosmetology at an approved school; (3) three to five years' practical experience.

Several states include cosmetology in their programs of Trade and Industrial Teacher Training. New York (best known to this investigator) has long had a very successful program for the public schools, to which teachers of cosmetology were admitted in 1928. In-service courses for teachers in private schools were added in 1945. In all state training programs everywhere, because the years of practical experience imply mastery of art and skill, the emphasis is not on subject matter but on analysis and organization of the student's trade, and methods of teaching it. Classes are heterogeneous, instruction is necessarily general, and each student must be able to adapt the information dispensed to his or her own needs. It is a clear case of "If you don't know what it's all about you won't know what it's all about."

In the related work art, science, mathematics, etc., those in cosmetology occasionally have difficulty because many instructors, knowing little or nothing of cosmetology, teach their subjects entirely in terms of the men's trades. This is particularly frustrating in science because of all the subjects taught as trades cosmetology is the only one (except, to an extent, barbering) in which the principal working material is not wood, metal or stone, but the *living human body*.

In New York, those that complete the state program (480 hours) for public schools are allowed one year of credit toward a B.S. degree in the School of Education at New York University. In devising a curriculum for teachers of cosmetology (14), the author found that the required general biology, anatomy (of *living* body), and other useful courses were ready-made in the department of physical education and health. Physics and chemistry could be taken either "straight" in the science department, or "applied" (diluted) in home economics. All required art was available, make-up (dramatic art) and business (School of Commerce); so it was necessary only for the cosmetologists to know how to utilize the information obtained in their own work. Given a competent and sympathetic adviser, a satisfactory curriculum can be assembled for ambitious cosmetologists anywhere.

Conspicuously absent from all programs of advanced study (as far as known to date) are courses on cosmetology, itself, which all teachers need to refresh and expand their early book knowledge of their own subject. Courses on the chemistry, composition and manufacture of cosmetics,



as given in scattered colleges of pharmacy and occasionally sponsored in the industry, are rarely of practical help to the large groups of teachers. The wise among them do not teach the making of cosmetics, and they discourage their future cosmetologists from amateurish competition with the many lines of standard commercial products in the market.

Cosmetology has come a long, long way in its short lifetime, and credit for improved standards and accomplishment should go to its own members. For reasons well known to those in the work, cosmetology is still classed with the service trades. It is still far from the professional status to which it aspires, but this is a worthy goal. Many other vocations have aimed at top place but have been content with a rating of semiprofessional or semitechnical.

It is hoped that this brief presentation may have brought the field of cosmetology more sharply into focus. Both the cosmetic industry and professional education have common interests in cosmetology, and there should be close cooperation for ultimate benefit to all. Certainly, if the ever-better products from the industry can be ever-more intelligently applied and promoted to all the prospective consumers, the improved appearance of those in the passing scene will make our world at least a much better-looking place in which to live.

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