

8. Nevertheless, under a teacher's careful and skilful guidance, it is an extremely useful exercise for a class to obtain the knowledge of facts or principles by means of contributions from the individuals composing the class; but then this knowledge in its concrete form, as well as the process by which it has been reached, should, by means of a lucid recapitulation, accompanied by test questions, be made the property of every member of the class. The aim in the former part of a good class-lesson is that each pupil should do something to help the others; the aim in the latter part is that each should receive the greatest possible benefit from the work of all.

9. During the whole of a lesson every pupil should be doing something to forward the attainment of the ultimate aim of that lesson. Of course it is only the teacher who knows exactly what this aim is; the pupils are merely giving effect to the teacher's measures for reaching it. It may be added that a teacher's success seems to depend to a large extent on his really setting a definite object before him and devising a plan of operations before he begins his class-work.

10. In teaching a class never tell your pupils what you may readily lead them to tell you. Never ask children to tell you what they have no means of knowing until you tell them; one cannot drink from an empty cup. Never put questions to which an indefinite number of correct answers may be given. Seldom ask questions which may be sufficiently answered by "Yes" or "No." Seldom put a question that *suggests* the right answer, such as, "How does the light from the sun differ from the reflected light of the moon?" Seldom answer your own questions.

11. A small amount of thoroughly systematic and coherent knowledge of any subject is of much greater utility than a superficial acquaintance with a large number of isolated facts. It is obvious, therefore, that in nearly every lesson each succeeding portion should be in close connection with what has immediately preceded it. In questioning, for instance, it is a good plan to base each new question on the last preceding answer.

12. When pupils fail at an examination their teacher may perhaps find consolation in thinking that the failure is owing to the children's stupidity or sullenness, or to the severity of the examiner. From the practical point of view, however, a teacher will generally find it answer better to assume, in the first place at all events, that failures have been caused by some inadequacy in his methods of training his pupils, and to endeavour to discover the defect, in order to get rid of it. In the end, of course, he may be led to conclude that the assumption is incorrect; but it will have done no harm in any case, and if it be correct it will in all probability lead to better results for the future.

Section B.—Special Subjects.

1. *Reading.*—The "look and say" method of teaching reading, used jointly with the phonic method for spelling, gives the very best results. Common irregular words such as *do, one, two*, must be mastered if a start is to be made at all, and the "look and say" is the only method of dealing with such words that is not thoroughly illogical, and confusing to a child's mind. In the earliest stages reading should be done almost entirely from the black-board, and the teacher should use in addition to the very common irregular words only those words that have been previously dealt with by the phonic method in a spelling-lesson. In reading-lessons the phrase rather than the word should from the very first be treated as the unit. Children who learn to read word by word naturally think, as each word is pronounced, that *so much* has been completed, when in fact nothing has been completed. This tends to make their reading jerky, monotonous, and unintelligent. If children are trained to consider the end of the phrase, and, later, the end of the sentence, their halting-place, the reading at once becomes more spirited and expressive.

In order to secure the continuous attention of a class it is well to make every pupil feel that *he* may be called upon to read at any moment; hence the practice of reading in turn is not to be commended. The best order in which to take the work of a reading-lesson is as follows: (a) General exposition by the teacher, with preliminary questioning; (b) completion of comprehension work; (c) simultaneous reading, after "model" reading by the teacher; (d) reading by individuals. As one cannot read with expression what one does not understand, it is plain that comprehension work should precede elocution.

2. *Spelling.*—In teaching spelling the first thing to be borne in mind is that groups of words may be found in which certain sounds are consistently represented by certain characters, and that in other cases there is no such regularity. As it is generally desirable to take what is easy first and leave what is difficult till afterwards, words that are perfectly regular should be dealt with first. A beginning is made by causing the sounds of which these words are composed to be connected in the pupils' minds with the characters that represent them, the names of these characters being taught incidentally as they come into use. By the development of this *phonic* method, as it is termed, children may speedily be taught to spell all perfectly regular words. Afterwards they must gradually *pick up*, by means of the alphabetical method and its modifications, the spelling of irregular words. Transcription is a powerful means of teaching spelling if the children are perfectly familiar with the pronunciation and meaning of what is transcribed. Dictation by itself teaches nothing, but it is a very useful test and a valuable means of *driving home* what has been previously learnt. Matter dictated should be read *only once*; thus children will be trained to at once grasp what they hear. The phonic method is specially useful in the case of Maori children, who are trained by it to produce in their purity the elementary sounds of the English language. It is hardly possible to carry this kind of training too far.

3. *Writing.*—A synthetic system of teaching writing is the best, because writing is in the main a constructive, practical art with only a modicum of science at the back of it. The elements, however, should generally be obtained by black-board analysis of written words in the presence of the class. Parallel lines for fixing comparative sizes of elements used, and others for determining the proper slant, are extremely useful in the earlier stages. But children taught on any *system* do very much better than those who are practically left to their own devices, and are merely reproved or punished for failure.