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INSTRUCTIONS

IN

METHODS OF TEACHING

BY

JAS. G. KENNEDY

Head School Inspector, San Francisco, Cal.

APRIL, 1888

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SAN FRANCISCO:

C. A. MURDOCK & CO., PRINTERS, 532 CLAY STREET.

1888.



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Principal *School*.

Below, please find instructions relating to methods of teaching, which you will strictly enforce in the school under your charge:

I. The Principles of Methods Stated.

To discover the law of mental growth let us observe the child. At birth, the mind of the child is undeveloped. By association with the external world, the powers of its mind are gradually unfolded. Through the medium of the senses, the objects with which the child comes in contact are daily perceived. By this frequent perception, perfect mental images of the different objects perceived are formed. During the process of the formation of these mental images, the child hears the word that represents the object perceived. Through this association, the child learns to distinguish and use the words which represent the objects perceived. By examining this process, we see that the first step in the mind's development is the presentation of the object to the mind for mental perception; the second step is the formation of a perfect mental image of the object presented; the third step is the expression of the mental image formed, or the word.

Stating this same principle broadly, we have, whether the lesson to be taught is in language, mathematics or science, the

steps are the same. First, the objective illustration, by the teacher, of the thought of the lesson; second, the conception, by the pupil, of the thought of the lesson; third, the original expression, by the pupil, of the thought of the lesson.

It follows from this, that the work of the teacher is the objective illustration of the thought of the lesson, while the work of the pupil is the perfect conception and the original expression of the thought of the lesson.

It follows also, that these three steps must be kept constantly in view, by the teacher, that he may perform *his* work only, and not the work of the pupil also.

The very object of all teaching, the development of original thought, and the cultivation of original expression, is often defeated by the teacher doing the work of the pupil.

2. **Spelling.**—Teach spelling by introducing the word objectively, studying its form, using it in a sentence. By this process, the three steps, suggested under “Principles of Methods Stated,” are kept in view. As noted under “Principles of Methods Stated,” the work of the teacher is the presentation of the word objectively, while the work of the pupil is the mastery of the form of the word and the use of the word in a sentence.

From this, it follows that column spelling is in violation of the “Principles of Methods Stated,” and should have no place in a progressive, modern school.

The object of spelling or word study, is to increase the speaking and the writing vocabulary of the child. The rational method of doing this is the one suggested above, and not by independent word or column spelling.

In oral spelling, which should be practiced but little, if any, do not allow the pupils to pronounce and number the syllables of the word spelled.

3. **Reading.**—To read well, one must know the thought of reading lesson. This knowledge must be developed in the mind of the child through conversational lessons and objective illustrations. After a pupil has a perfect conception of the thought of the reading lesson, he is ready to express that thought correctly, or to read. Again, we have the three

steps suggested under "Principles of Methods Stated." First, the objective illustration of the thought of the reading lesson; second, the mastery or the perfect conception of the thought of the reading lesson; third, the natural expression of the thought of the reading lesson. As suggested under "Principles of Methods Stated," the work of the teacher is the objective illustration of the thought of the reading lesson, while the work of the pupil is the mastery and the expression of the thought of the reading lesson.

The reading of the pupil should be in a natural tone of voice, and in an easy conversational style. The pupil, before he can read in this manner, must be able to group the related words in a sentence, and to raise his eyes from the printed or written page at the important words and phrases.

The practice of compelling or allowing pupils to point while reading is a bad one, as it develops a disconnected style of expression, much like the pronunciation of independent words arranged in columns. This practice destroys all natural expression of thought, the true object of oral reading. It should be strictly prohibited.

In reading, pay strict attention to correct pronunciation and distinct articulation.

4. **Composition.**—Pupils cannot write compositions unless they know what they are going to write about. This knowledge of the composition subject must be developed in the mind of the pupil through conversational lessons and objective illustrations. The three steps suggested, under "Principles of Methods Stated," are obvious in this work. First, the objective presentation of the thought of the composition subject; second, the mastery of the thought of the composition subject; third, the original expression of the thought of the composition subject.

As laid down, under "Principles of Methods Stated," the work of the teacher is the objective illustration of the thought of the composition subject, while the work of the pupil is the complete mastery and the original expression of the thought of the composition subject.

All grammar work should be incidental to the composition work. Pupils should be taught capitals, punctuation, and

construction in connection with the writing of compositions. In primary and grammar schools, mood, tense, case, complex analysis and parsing should be stopped. This work should be left for the High Schools. The work of the primary and grammar schools is the expression of thought, or composition writing, letter writing, etc.

5. **Arithmetic.**—In arithmetic, everything, whether principle or process, example or table, should be first taught objectively. In teaching principle, process or example, small numbers, easily handled by the pupil, should be used. After the objective presentation of the lesson, by the teacher, comes the mastery and the expression of the lesson, by the pupil. Again, the three steps suggested, under “Principles of Methods Stated,” are apparent. First, the objective presentation of the principle, the process, the example, etc.; second, the mastery of the principle, the process, the example, etc.; third, the statement or the expression of the principle, the process, or the example, etc. As suggested under “Principles of Methods Stated,” the work of the teacher is the objective presentation of the principle, the process, or the example, while the work of the pupil is the mastery and the expression of the principle, the process, or the example.

Adopt, in all cases, short, practical processes of operation, such as are dictated by common sense and used by business men.

6. **History and Geography.**—These two studies should be presented objectively through maps, and be taught together, making each supplement the other. The pupil's knowledge should be developed through maps drawn by himself. This knowledge should increase as the map is studied and drawn. These maps should be drawn neatly, rapidly and accurately, without artistic finish; they are intended to develop a knowledge of History and Geography, and not to teach artistic shading and coloring. In these studies we have the three steps suggested under “Principles of Methods Stated.” First, the objective presentation of the lesson through globes and maps; second, the mastery of the lesson presented; third, the expres-

sion of the lesson by means of original maps, oral and written speech.

The order of procedure in teaching these two studies is as follows: Begin at home, travel outward until you finish the subject, and connect the geography and history at each step. In drawing maps to illustrate and to develop a knowledge of the subject, the order is form, surface, productions, places, giving the history of each point as it presents itself.

7. Kindergarten Work.—This work should receive special attention, and be carried out in the spirit intended by the Board of Education. It affords the best means of developing a knowledge of number, form, color and language.

Clay modeling being the basis of a correct knowledge of form, it should receive greater consideration at the hands of principals and teachers.

8. Drawing.—This study is the basis of mechanical and industrial art, and should, therefore, receive greater attention than it does in many of the schools. It is one of the most important branches taught in the public schools.

9. Oral Instruction.—Information on the subjects for this kind of work should be developed through conversational lessons and objective illustrations. This work should be faithfully performed by the class teacher, as upon it depends the pupil's general information about common things. It should be taught orally, as suggested above, and not by written questions and answers, which the pupils are compelled to memorize.

The three steps suggested under "Principles of Methods Stated" is applicable in teaching this branch, as well as in Kindergarten Work, Drawing and Penmanship. In fact, there is no study to which this principle is not applicable, and to which it should not be applied in teaching.

10. Definitions and Rules.—Definitions and Rules should be developed from the pupil's knowledge of the subject, and not be memorized from notes or books.

11. Marking Papers.—Under the direction of the teacher, the pupil should correct all written exercises. The object is to train the pupil's critical judgment. Do not have classes change papers for the purpose of correction.

The home work of the teacher is not the correction of papers; it is the preparation of the lessons of the next day, so that they may be presented objectively.

12. **Standing in Class.**—The practice of standing in class during recitations is a bad one, as pupils soon become weary and inattentive. Stop it.

13. **Course of Study.**—Carry out the Course of Study in all particulars. Principals and teachers are not authorized to make changes. Criticisms of the Course of Study will be gladly received at the office.

14. **Division of Grade.** — Divide each grade into two divisions, and keep them together in the work of the year.

15. **Ventilation.**—Teachers should have charge of the ventilation of their respective rooms. More attention should be paid to this subject. In many rooms the air was found to be perfectly foul from want of proper care by the teacher.

16. **Originality.**—Teachers should be allowed the fullest liberty in the manner of presenting work to their classes. The method used should be objective; the originality should be shown in the manner of presentation of lessons.

Please have your assistants read these instructions that there may be no misunderstanding as to the methods that they are expected to follow in their teaching.

Respectfully,

JOS. G. KENNEDY,

Hd. Insp. Teacher.

The above outline of Correct Methods, by Mr. Kennedy, is worthy the careful study of every teacher in the department. If the purpose of this paper is understood and carried out, the instruction in many of our schools will be far above its present plane.

M. BABCOCK,

Deputy Supt. Schools.

