HOW TO TEACH. A GRADED COURSE OF INSTRUCTION AND MANUAL OF METHODS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS

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How to teach. A graded course of instruction and manual of methods for the use of teachers by Henry Kiddle & Thomas F. Harrison & N. A. Calkins

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GRADED COURSE OF INSTRUCTION

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BY

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PREFACE.

THE system of graded instruction, which has become so general in this country, requires for its successful application, the constant use, on the part of the teacher, of a guide, or chart, to which he may refer in order that his present work may harmonize with that which preceded, and that which is to follow it. The ground to be covered in a complete course of school education, however elementary, is quite extensive, and hence needs to be divided and subdivided according to certain established principles, so that the mind of the instructor may not be diverted from that which should engage his immediate attention, by the necessity of considering and choosing the best means of supplementing it. graded system of teaching can best be prepared by those who have had not only a long experience in the practical business of teaching, but whose field of observation has been sufficiently comprehensive to enable them to give to the scheme an adaptability to a great variety of circumstances.

The system laid down in the work here offered to practical educators, whether teachers, superintendents, or school officers, is designed to afford such a guide as

is above indicated. It is essentially the system which has been in use in the city of New York for some years, only differing from it in the number of grades into which the course is divided. This difference is, however, rather nominal than real, since the number of grades into which a course of study is divided is entirely arbitrary, except so far as it may be dictated by special circumstances. Where schools are very large, and the attendance of pupils is fluctuating, as must be the case in so populous a city as New York, the necessity of constantly reorganizing classes, renders frequent promotions, or transfers from class to class, indispensable, and, hence, a large number of grades becomes a convenience. In schools having a smaller and steadier attendance, the number of grades need not exceed what is requisite for a proper classification and division of subjects for simultaneous study. The order of studies -the main point in every course of instruction-corresponds, as here arranged, precisely with the New York plan; the time requisite for its completion is also about the same.

This course, with its division into grades, constitutes, however, only the frame-work for the series of practical suggestions designed to assist teachers in the performance of their professional duties—that is, in some degree, to show them what to teach, as well as how to teach. All the precepts and directions here given have been dictated by an earnest desire to aid in the effort now universally put forth by the ablest and most intelligent

school officers to abolish the pernicious rote method of teaching, by book and formula, formerly so prevalent, and to make universal the system which appeals, from first to last, to the intelligence of the pupil, and adapts itself to its progressive stages of development. In the lower grades, the objective, or perceptive, system is, of course, made prominent, to be succeeded by those subjects and methods which, as they dispense to a considerable extent with the actual objects themselves, and appeal to the acquired ideas of the pupils, may be properly denominated conceptive.

The natural and physical sciences, it will be observed, are largely drawn upon for the materials necessary to accomplish this object, the sciences of observation and classification, such as zoology, botany, and mineralogy, properly taking precedence of those which require a more special application of the reflective and reasoning faculties, such as physiology, natural philosophy, and astronomy. By this kind of teaching, it is designed that the pupil shall acquire the ability to gain an experience of his own, instead of depending exclusively upon that of others, and at the same time, shall acquire a taste for the observation and study of nature.

Certainly such a system for the common schools of our country is far preferable to that which, although insuring proficiency in the "three R's" left the pupil's mind in a condition of matured stolidity, and while, perhaps, a most ready talking, writing, and parsing machine, sent him forth to go through this beautiful world, blind to its manifold wonders and glories, and fit only to become the easy prey of the demagogue and the bigot.

It is an evidence of the increasing earnestness of teachers, that the demand for practical suggestions and exact information in regard to their work is now so great. More especially is this so in the case of those engaged in primary school instruction. This department of teaching requires very much special knowledge as well as peculiar tact to produce successful results. A complete exposition of the various methods which are applicable to each stage of this work would require a much larger space than could be devoted to it in the book here published. Hence, references to more full and complete works on the subject have been given in connection with several of the grades, in order to aid teachers in finding the additional information which they may need in this direction.

The demand for copies of the "Manual of Instruction and Discipline," recently prepared by the authors of this work, for the use of the primary and grammar schools of the city of New York, has induced them to endeavor to put the work into a shape in which it might be generally useful; and they trust that, as it is now presented to those engaged in practical education, it will prove an acceptable addition to the literature of American pedagogy, now so scanty and insufficient.

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