

**INSTITUTE MANUAL CONTAINING
COURSE OF STUDY FOR TEACHERS,
TOGETHER WITH WORKING PLANS
AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IOWA
NORMAL INSTITUTES, 1900**

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Institute Manual Containing Course of Study for Teachers, Together with Working Plans and suggestions for Iowa normal institutes, 1900 by Richard C. Barrett

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RICHARD C. BARRETT

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WORKING PLANS AND SUGGESTIONS

FOR

IOWA NORMAL INSTITUTES

1900.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

DES MOINES, IOWA

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INTRODUCTION.

The following pages have been most carefully prepared in response to the request of the Iowa Educational Council. It is a serious attempt to set out a course of study and also a consensus of the best modern plans and methods of conducting a teachers' normal institute. In the preparation of this manual, the editors have called to their aid the expert judgment and experience of a number of educators who have devoted great attention to these special lines, deeming this a more rapid and practical method than to select a single third person, as the committee was originally instructed to do by the council. While it is probable that this contribution to educational work may not reach the standard expected by those who will use it, yet it is sincerely hoped that it will be the means of making many helpful suggestions to institute workers, and, at the same time, may also more nearly unify the work of the state, so that the discussions at teachers' associations and the conferences of institute instructors may be made more comprehensive and decisive. Friendly criticism is invited so that, in the time to come, a more valuable and practical institute manual may be the result.

Respectfully submitted by the committee of editors,

RICHARD C. BARRETT,
Superintendent Public Instruction.
HOMER H. SEERLEY,
President Iowa State Normal School.

No.

To the Teacher:

This pamphlet belongs to this county and is loaned to you only so long as you are actively engaged in teaching in the public schools. The number at the top of the note corresponds with the record number kept by the county superintendent. When you are through with the pamphlet, or cease teaching, you will please return the same to him.

To the County Superintendent:

You are urged to keep a correct account of all copies of this outline, in order that the same may be used year after year in the institute. This may be done by keeping in a record book the name of the person receiving the pamphlet, and opposite the same placing the number which agrees with that above.

RICHARD C. BARRETT,
Superintendent Public Instruction.

COURSE OF STUDY.

WORKING PLANS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT AND THE UNIFICATION OF THE IOWA NORMAL INSTITUTES.

PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS AND CONSIDERATIONS.

1. *The problems involved.*

The Iowa Normal Institute is an evolution. For a quarter of a century the best thought and experience of county superintendents, conductors and instructors has been directed to making these short summer convocations of the teachers of the several counties of the state the most interesting, instructive and beneficial that talent, organization and discipline could accomplish. In many counties the chief burden of the work to be done is still that of giving academic instruction. In such cases the sessions should be at least four weeks, and the organization and management should be directed to giving instruction on the more prominent features of the several branches, yet with a realization that an institute can never take the place of a school and that deficiencies in actual scholarship must be corrected by attending school, and that only improvement in the spirit of instruction, in the method of presentation and in the philosophy of arrangement and unification can be accomplished even in a four weeks' session. Only persons who have quite a good fund of knowledge of a branch at the opening of an institute can be expected to actually profit much by the class exercises suitable to be given. In some counties it is possible to give specific attention to the best and most sensible methods of teaching the several branches and not undertake the perfecting of the knowledge of the subject matter to any great extent. In such fortunate localities a two weeks' session will be sufficient to accomplish more real institute work than is usually the result of attempting a mixed method—partly academic instruction and partly institute instruction. Whenever the time comes that institute instruction is actually differentiated from academic instruction and the common confusion is removed, then will the training of teachers in the right and proper way through institute management begin to be a reality.

2. *Organization and management.*

Teachers and those expecting soon to be teachers should be the only persons enrolled at a teachers' institute. The work presented in these pages is not intended for children from the grammar and high school grades who enroll in the institute with the idea that perhaps they may teach some time in the future. It is presented with the thought that the persons to be taught are teachers, differing chiefly in experience and age, and hence are qualified in judgment and in scholarship to consider matters from the teachers' standpoint. While it is necessary to offer most subjects required for teachers' certificates, yet the assignments are, as a rule, too many rather than too few, and too much is attempted in each assignment rather than

too little. To save time this manual is arranged in the order of daily lessons, it being understood that the lesson in each subject assigned to each day must be taken up at that time. Much time and strength is wasted in many institutes by the teachers enrolled not knowing definitely what work will be expected each day of the limited session. A properly organized institute is so systematically planned that the entire program for all the days of the brief session is placed in the hands of each member. This enables study to center about the points to be discussed, and will encourage investigation and develop interest far beyond the indefinite, indeterminate plan so commonly in vogue and that causes most classes to assemble from day to day without any definite and positive knowledge of what the several instructors plan to undertake.

3. *Inspirational influence.*

Teachers need encouragement more than criticism. They should have sympathy, help and uplift rather than drill and discipline. When a teacher gets into the right spirit, when he feels the inspiration of the living side of the business that he follows, then he begins to apply himself diligently to improve, then he finds his disposition to do better increased, and he grows and develops rapidly and continuously. Hence the institute should be so conducted that no daily roll calls, at chapel or in class rooms, should be necessary, and that a final report made by each member at the close of the session would take the place of the formalism that so frequently exhausts so much of the valuable time that should be devoted to the real work of the institute. To assist in attaining the inspiration and the preparatory condition so necessary to a successful day's work of an institute, a bright, helpful, suggestive, encouraging address should be given each morning, as a fitting introduction to the day's thought and effort. Suitable subjects for such addresses are numerous, and they should be chosen from day to day to fit the temper and the needs of teachers in attendance. Such subjects as "Ideals," "Helpfulness," "The Teacher's Province," "Individuality," "Personal Responsibility," "Faith and Works," "The Unusual Element," "Doing More Than Others," "Superiority," "The Supreme Province of Manliness," etc., etc., will develop an atmosphere that will bring results far beyond what is the common experience. Far more should be done for spontaneity and for a right feeling than is commonly undertaken, and the attempt should be made to send the teachers away from a session of an institute never again to be as indifferent, as careless or as lacking in true spirit as they were when they came.

With these conceptions of the aim and the purpose of an institute, with these assurances of the wonderful possibilities to be realized by instructors who "teach with both the spirit and the understanding," these outlines of daily lessons suitable for institute work are submitted, as suggestions and ideas to be realized and worked out by every thoughtful, earnest instructor who uses and studies them rather than as formal lessons to be blindly followed from day to day or from year to year by that grand body of workers who are to be privileged to stand before the rank and file of teachers in the fields of pedagogic thought and action.

THE NORMAL INSTITUTE AS A FIELD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT.

1. *Limits Imposed.*—It is necessary to realize that any session of any organization like the normal institute has decided limitations regarding

the work to be undertaken and the work that can be accomplished. Any assumption that some system of organization or some kind of instructors or some method of applying pressure can overcome these limitations is a serious error. The institute often fails because it undertakes the impossible, because it tries to do more work by remaining in session long hours beyond the limits of reason, and because it permits the teachers to enroll in more classes and attend more recitations than the human mind can endure. The recitations should be at least forty-five minutes long, and no teacher enrolled should be granted the privilege of attending more than five class exercises. It must be always remembered that it is better to profit by a few exercises than to be exhausted and fatigued by the many, and thus be injured rather than benefited.

2. *The Program.*—The constructing of an effective program with suitable rest periods and variations, so as to regard mental laws of activity, is no small task. There is as much of a profitable order to institute work as there is to any other of human activity. The management of an institute should aim at quality rather than quantity, efficiency rather than superfluity, thought-getting rather than thought-impressing, simplicity rather than complexity, interest rather than enthusiasm. To this end, the institute should, as far as possible, not close with an examination for teachers' certificates and should not be conducted upon the compulsory plan of attendance, since it should be so conducted that those who attend will feel that it is a privilege rather than a requirement. The spirit of the management is, therefore, a most important consideration, and can never wisely be overlooked or thrust aside as unnecessary to the best and most far-reaching results.

3. *The Regulations.*—There must be regulations, but they should be of a kind that are reasonable and fair. The teacher's certificate should be graded upon some different basis than a scholarship that is determined by an acquired capability to answer a large percentage of the ordinary stock questions commonly required from year to year, from which much variation is well nigh impossible. The teacher's real grade of certificate should be determined from a different standpoint of ranking than is commonly conceded. Those features are: 1.—Spirit. 2.—Successful experience. 3.—Technical scholarship. The helpfulness of a teacher to the school, to the community and to educational work should constitute the element of spirit, as it means growth and development and larger efficiency. Experience and scholarship are both dead factors and inert influences without spirit.

Conducting the Institute.—This is not a formality nor a function. It is in reality the life-giving influence. Formalism, records, reports, class books, machine regularity, the lock-step, are incidents and externals, not genuine evidences of effective work. The conductor should be a power for helpfulness. He should be a message-giver, a field marshal with inspiration for every worker and a guide to every member enrolled. Great care should be taken in selecting such official, as on his spirit, enthusiasm and helpfulness will depend largely the consequent results.

5. *The Province of Instructing.*—Those who are called to instruct should be specialists to a very high degree. They must be able to "do more than others." It is not enough to fill a place, to consume an hour, to rank as an instructor. It is necessary to do so well that every teacher in the class feels the influence, recognizes the power of the leader and cheerfully fol-

lows the order of his thinking. Instructing in an institute means mastery of method, keenness of style of presentation, readiness of analytic thinking, grasp of essentials and force of directness in control of the mind of others.

6. *The Entertaining Feature.*—There is more or less tendency to dissipation through certain entertaining features frequently introduced. An evening lecture to a properly managed institute where the strongest work is being done is generally a useless extra, because it is an attempt to go beyond what is possible. Many a lecturer has wondered why his institute audience was so lacking in response, so unappreciative of his best efforts, so indifferent to his message when the facts were that the teachers were so exhausted by the daily work required that they were incompetent to enjoy or to profit by the ablest and the most thoughtful efforts on educational lines. There is therefore a limit in the capacity for being instructed or entertained, and large expenditures of money are fruitless in producing desired results after the energy has reached an equilibrium that only rest and recreation can restore to a condition of possible activity.

7. *The County Superintendent's Province.*—This is a distinct field. It is the place of authority, of responsibility and of success or failure. It is a difficult field to manage well, as it requires such large judgment, experience and insight. The success of a superintendent depends more upon what he does before the institute than upon what he does during the session. He will find it very hard to keep strictly his own place and let the plans and methods of organization, that he has determined, have a chance to succeed.

It is easier for the superintendent to attempt to do too much of too many things rather than to actually do the things that he must do and which no other person can really do. There is no kind of school work where there can be so much waste and so much needless organization, or where a steadier head, firmer hand, or a more executive power of thought are so essential. The county superintendent is therefore the dictator of the institute, the author of its plans, the arbiter of its destiny; and he should not undertake to fill this majestic province and also assume to instruct or to perform other variable service, since by so doing he robs the institute of his best work and his best service, as the institute needs still a supervision which is broader, more far reaching and more valuable than the other functions can grant. Supervising an institute is a great business when done in a right way, and nothing should be permitted to degrade or deteriorate this exalted field of official authority, discretion and service.

THE APPLICATION OF THIS MANUAL TO THE INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTE.

This manual is prepared for a four weeks' session of a normal institute, as it is believed that such a length of session is very desirable. Yet where this is regarded as unnecessary or impossible it is practicable to select from the lessons outlined such a number and variety as will best suit the teachers of that particular institute. It has been attempted to make these outlines full and complete so that the whole field of institute instruction may be fairly covered. It is not intended that all here suggested must necessarily be done in any one session of an institute, but such a variety is here presented that in the course of several years this amount of work can well be undertaken and accomplished.

The course in methods here outlined for the several branches is a detail of what seems to be the most practicable and suggestive topics for develop-

ing and illustrating the methods of teaching regarded as the most modern and the most effective. Whether these should be used in place of the academic lessons also given must be left to the discretion of the management of the individual institute, as in some institutes academic work will be required in some branches while method work will be practicable in other branches. To try to fit both needs has been the attempt of the manual, leaving it after all to each county to decide what particular lines or applications are best to be selected.

PROFESSIONAL WORK IN AN INSTITUTE.

The success of didactic work depends entirely upon the knowledge, the experience and the judgment of the instructor. No work can have more value or significance to the teacher. In these outlines an attempt is made to select a series of topics that will suit the particular needs of the different kinds of teachers found enrolled. The plan has been carefully worked out with the belief that there are certain things that an institute should undertake to do for its teachers, and that there are certain other just as necessary things that the institute should leave the teachers to do for themselves. Professional education is a growth and takes time to be accomplished. The themes here given will, therefore, mean more and more to teachers as they advance in knowledge and experience. Just what an instructor should do for any class in any one of these lessons depends upon the class itself, as a constant differentiation must be made to render the work undertaken adaptable to the needs of the special individuals who constitute the class. With this thought uppermost, these lessons are suggested as very useful lines for investigation and discussion under competent direction in the average normal institute.