

## Elementary Reading

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(Continued from last issue)

When reading from the books I call for two words, three words, four words as the phrase demands, to be read silently then aloud, jumping around the class. This holds attention as they never know upon whom I will call next. I have found this plan equally successful in Grades II and III.

Oral Reading is the expression in the exact words of the printed page, of the thought gained from that page by silent reading. Intelligent oral reading depends upon understanding the thought. Oral Reading must be both expressive and fluent and this depends upon seeing the words in groups. We have worked to this end from the beginning and must so continue to work through the Primary Grades.

Questioning by teacher is a great aid in obtaining expression. For instance Sarah is asked to read, "Tom has an egg." She succeeds in naming the words correctly, but fails to give any expression. What has Tom? I ask. Who has the egg? "Dan had a dog." What did Dan have? a bird? Who owned the dog? "Run fox, or the dog will catch you." Do you want the fox to be caught? What is the fox doing? Make him run.

"I see a big pig." What do you see? What kind of a pig? Make him big—or bigger than that, etc.

Another aid to expression is by getting the thought from silent reading. Read with the eyes. I say. Now tell me what your eyes read. No! *tell it to me.* Tell it so your classmates will know what you saw. Tell it pleasantly. If the lesson has a story, bring out the points of the story in a little questioning. Now tell the story to your classmates. When the thought is grasped it will be given clearly. The attention of the class may be held by the fact that they are watching for errors. These may be corrected by class questioning, but the reader must not be interrupted, to correct an error. Wait till he has finished, then have the mistakes pointed out, corrected, and the passage reread.

Expression may also be obtained by imitation. By imitating a good reader in the class or by imitating the teacher. But this I hold as a last resource.

Too much importance cannot be laid on the amount and variety of drill necessary to make the words used well known. As the number of words learned increases it will be found necessary to drill them in a period apart from the reading period. Certainly a child should not stop in reading a sentence to find out a word.

Neither should children of the Primary Grades be sent home to learn a lesson the words of which have not been taught in school. Ours is the task to instruct. But Primary children may be sent home to put down on paper a given number of times a word or words which have been taught that day. This has a three-fold purpose. It tests the child's memory. It brings the home in touch with the school. It also serves as a foundation for future *home study*. These words may be printed on paper provided by the teacher. For this purpose I introduce paper folding. We fold a book. Now take it home and put down in your book five times the word we learned today. Great care is taken of this little book, it will hold all the words for the week. The children will treasure them all up as long as we use them. When they have learned to print on lines I ask them to get ruled note-books.

Primary teaching rightly consists of two-thirds drill work. The skillful teacher will construct her own methods and devices for these drills, often called forth by the present needs of the class, always remembering however that any drill which does not arouse the child's mental activity is worthless. A good drill should be a good mental gymnastic.

One or two successful devices might be mentioned. The words may be placed on the successive rounds of a ladder and the children may climb up or down this ladder. He who misses falls off and must try again. Tell the story of Virginia. Or again the words may be placed on the board in a list. Two children may be selected to go to the front. One indicates to the class a word which he wishes the other child to find. The second child then turns and points to a word asking "Is it chick?" The class responding. No, it is not chick, or yes, it is chick as the case may be. The entire class is getting a good drill in word mastery. This may be kept up as long as is considered necessary. (Describe this more fully.)

With children who have advanced to Grades II and III phonics should continue to be a part of the daily drill. A pupil may have entered these grades from an outside district where phonics were not taught. Or it is quite possible for a child to forget the sounds of the letters where a phonic drill is not kept up. I have had pupils in Grade VI who had not the faintest idea of the sounds. Appeared not to know what I was talking of when I asked for sounds. A class in Grades II, III and IV should frequently be called upon for

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